Natalia and *Menzikof*:

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY

AGAINST

PETER THE GREAT.

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF KRATTER.

Wisdom and Goodness to the Vile seem vile.

Lear.

.....Oh Conspiracy!
Sham'st thou not to show thy dangerous Brow by Night
When Evils are most free? Oh then by Day
Where wilt thou find a Cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous Visage?.....

Julius Cæsar.

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1798.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PETER ALEXIEWITZ, Emperor of Ruſſia.
ALEXANDER MENZIKOF, Field Marſhal.
PRINCE AMILKA, Father of
NATALIA KUVANSKI.
PRINCE OBSODAR.
KILLIAN, High Prieſt.
MASSALSKY, Senator.
GENERAL BAUER, a German Officer in the Ruſſian Service.
COUNT TZUDOF.
CYRILLA, his Daughter.
PETERCHEN, her Child,
PRINCE SERDJUKOW, condemned to be the Court Fool.
PRESIDENT of the Supreme Criminal Court of Juſtice.
EIGHT JUDGES.
A MOOR.
A JAILER.
MESSENGERS, SOLDIERS, and CONSPIRATORS.

The Scene lies in Peterſburgh.

NATALIA AND MENZIKOF.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A narrow, obſcure, deep vaulted paſſage, from whence one ſees from the different ſides the iron doors of priſons. Sometimes there appears the glimmering of a diſmal lamp from the diſtant part of the vault.

CYRILLA *and the* KEEPER OF THE PRISON.

CYRILLA.

(Comes haſtily out, then looks around her)

WHERE art thou?

JAILER.

(Still from within the ſcene.) Oho!—I am coming.

CYRILLA.

Thou art lethargy and ſloth perſonified, thou moveſt onwards as if thy ſoul had been delivered up to death.

JAILER.

(Coming in ſlowly with a large bunch of keys in his hand—then laying his lanthorn ſlowly on the ground.) Say on as you pleaſe! once for all I tell you that I ſhall not put myſelf in a hurry.

CYRILLA.

What wouldeſt thou mean by that? come on, however.

JAILER.

I am in no ſuch haſte.

CYRILLA.

Oh, if thou haſt any feeling!

JAILER.

I do not willingly put myſelf in a hurry for my own affairs——much leſs have I feeling for other people.

CYRILLA.

Thou canſt never have been a father, nor ever have felt what it is to be a ſon.

JAILER.

(Lifting up the lanthorn with a tedious motion.) Idle prating! *(Lays down the lanthorn again by the door*

door of one of the priſons.) Well, I never could have believed that the ſun would have ſhone again on the face of this old man.

CYRILLA.

Is it here where my father is? Oh my God!

JAILER.

Let me ſee whether I have the right key or not. ——*(Searches ſlowly.)*

CYRILLA.

Tireſome malice!

JAILER.

Yes, that's it. *(Opens a lock.)* I ſhall have done it with the firſt.——*(Throws the keys on the ground, and blows his noſe.)*

CYRILLA.

Dear virtue of patience—to poſſeſs thee at this moment would be criminal! *(Lifts the keys from the ground and gives them to him.)* If thou art a man—

JAILER.

Let me alone. *(Throws the keys down again at her feet.)* I almoſt believe you are getting into a paſſion. *(Turns tediouſly the ſecond lock.)* Why, it is quite ruſted!

CYRILLA.

Let me try, perhaps I ſhall ſucceed better.

JAILER.

Leave me in peace, ſay I, or elſe I'll make you ſtand half the day there. *(Looking into her hand.)* What! have you been ſo ſimple as all that comes to!——yes, yes, if it had pleaſed you to have for once opened your ſtrong box, you might through that have found ſtrength ſufficient.

CYRILLA.

Can gold make Thee tractable then? there take, take!

JAILER.

Many thanks to you. *(Blows his noſe very tediouſly again.)* Now it will do. *(Opens the third lock.)* Come forth old man!

SCENE II.

CYRILLA, *the* KEEPER OF THE PRISON, *and* TZUDOF, *in the ancient Ruſſian habit, with a long beard.*

TZUDOF.

(Still from the interior of the priſon.) What, are they bringing me forth to execution?

CYRILLA.

Oh my father!

TZUDOF.

TZUDOF.

Art thou really her? *(Tranſported with joy.)* Oh my Cyrilla, thou art actually here!

JAILER.

(In going away.) What fooliſh people!

CYRILLA.

I have you again!

TZUDOF.

How cameſt thou to me?

CYRILLA.

You are at liberty.

TZUDOF.

At liberty? at liberty, my child?

CYRILLA.

(Supporting him in her arms.) My poor father!

TZUDOF.

Oh Cyrilla!—my child!

CYRILLA.

(Looks ſtedfaſtly on him awhile, then after a pauſe) You are become very old my father!

TZUDOF.

Yes, older by half a century.

CYRILLA.

CYRILLA.

My God, how you look!

TZUDOF.

Like one, my child, who has languiſhed ten years in a priſon.

CYRILLA.

Oh God! I can conceive nothing more horrible than this eternity you have paſſed.

TZUDOF.

No, not altogether ſo horrid as thou mayeſt ſuppoſe, nor ſo wholly unhappy neither.

CYRILLA.

You, not wholly unhappy?

TZUDOF.

Had I not a child that prayed for me, that cared for me?

CYRILLA.

Oh my father!

TZUDOF.

How oft has the ſweet reflection on thee ſtifled in me all feeling of regret and miſery!——and now after ten terrible years do I preſs thee again to this warm paternal heart!——feel only how this heart beats!

CYRILLA.

CYRILLA.

You have not forgotten in your affliction the ſentiments of tenderneſs.

SCENE III.

CYRILLA, TZUDOF, NATALIA EUVANSKI, *and the* JAILER.

NATALIA.

(Still from within the ſcenes.) Where is he?—— *(The Jailer comes on ſlowly before her, with a lanthorn in his hand, then ſtopping ſhort.)* Here. *(Natalia haſtens to Tzudof with outſtretched arms.)* Welcome, Count! welcome from the obſcure habitation of eternal midnight, apprehenſion, and alarm!

TZUDOF.

Who are you?

NATALIA.

Do you not know me?

CYRILLA.

Do you not know the Princeſs Natalia?

TZUDOF.

(With extacy.) Are you her? oh God! do I then behold again that gentle, blooming, lovely maid? Oh children, you bleſs and chear my heart more than

than what the appearance of an Angel from Heaven could do——what joy to behold once more the charms of the human countenance.

CYRILLA.

Natalia is for *you* really the appearance of an Angel——behold in her your deliverer!

TZUDOF.

(Aſtoniſhed.) Was it not thyſelf then?

CYRILLA.

Is it then any real difference to you, my dear Father?——what ſhe has done, ſhe had the power and intereſt to do——what I could not do, that wiſhed I to have the power of doing; believe me, your child has left no poſſible means, not any ſubmiſſion untried.

TZUDOF.

Support me, my children! my knees tremble under me. I ought to proſtrate myſelf before you; but this full meaſure of ſudden joy, and my trembling thankfulneſs have quite unnerved me!

NATALIA.

(To the Jailer.) Is there no chair in this place?

JAILER.

There's one ſtanding in that hole.

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Am I to bring it out myſelf?

JAILER.

(Bringing out the chair, which he ſets down rudely.) There you have it. [*Exit.*

TZUDOF.

Now grant me a few moments repoſe——and tell me how it has gone with you children, during this little Eternity?

NATALIA.

I have ſurvived a heavy and terrible fate.

TZUDOF.

(Patting her hand.) One would ſcarcely believe that, in looking on thy ſweet face.

NATALIA.

Think on me only as the wife of Prince Euvanſki!

TZUDOF.

That tyrant? that ferocious monſter?

NATALIA.

In naming him to you, I have at once recounted my inexpreſſible miſery, for you were well acquainted with his immeaſurable thirſt after oppreſſion.

TZUDOF.

(With a melancholy intereſt.) You muſt have been extremely miſerable.

NATALIA.

(Embracing him.) Thanks, thanks to you my dear friend for the warm intereſt you take in my diſtreſſes! but the barbarian in a fit of rage fell ſuddenly to the ground.

TZUDOF.

And was dead?

NATALIA.

Was dead.

TZUDOF.

And now you are a widow, and again at liberty?

NATALIA.

No, but I have exchanged my iron chains for garlands of roſes.

CYRILLA.

Wiſh her joy! for ſhe is betrothed to the moſt noble ſpirited, as well as the moſt amiable and worthieſt man in all Ruſſia, MENZIKOF.

TZUDOF.

MENZIKOF? the name is ſcarcely known to me.

NATALIA.

Do you not recollect that Menzikof, who in Moſcow, won the Emperor's favour when but a paſtry-cook's boy?

TZUDOF.

He who the Emperor got educated, and then took into his own cabinet, and to whom he afterwards gave a variety of employments, according to the improvement of his rare abilities? Is it not the ſame?

NATALIA.

The very ſame; for whom fate had in ſo wonderful a manner traced out the path of future grandeur——his bold aſpiring genius and merit lifted him rapidly from ſtep to ſtep; ſcarcely had he yet attained to man's eſtate, than he already accompanied the Emperor, cloathed with the dignity of Field Marſhal.

TZUDOF.

Unheard of!

CYRILLA.

But then what a man is he——what an example for mankind!—what a bold enterpriſing ſpirit does he unite with never-ceaſing action! then what perfect juſtice and integrity governs his mind; he's armed with the ſtrength of iron and ſteel againſt

himſelf——with what irreſiſtible enchantment does he attract the hearts and ſenſes of all parties to himſelf!——every thing that human nature is ſuſceptible of, either in ſtrength, perfection, or ſublime qualities, that he poſſeſſes!——for us, he is a ſecond Emperor, what this cannot perform, the other does through him; and what is performed by him, cannot be ſurpaſſed by any other mortal.

TZUDOF.

Thou tranſporteſt me; but with this delightful account I had nearly forgotten to inform myſelf of thy fate Cyrilla.

CYRILLA.

(Embarraſſed.) Ah! my father!

TZUDOF.

When I was taken from thee, thou wert engaged in marriage to Prince Serdjukow.

CYRILLA.

Another time my father!

TZUDOF.

And why not equally well at preſent? thou appeareſt embarraſſed, has then Serdjukow abandoned thee?

CYRILLA.

No.

Or

TZUDOF.

Or thou him?

CYRILLA.

Not that either.

TZUDOF.

Is he ſtill alive?

CYRILLA.

More is the pity.

TZUDOF.

And is perhaps quite——

CYRILLA.

Condemned you would ſay?

TZUDOF.

To death?

CYRILLA.

Would it were but that!

TZUDOF.

Unravel then this fearful myſtery!

CYRILLA.

Oh diſhonour and everlaſting ſhame! no, that I have not the power to do.

NATALIA.

The unfortunate man was enveloped in a conſpiracy againſt the Emperor. He appeared not guilty of the charge when it was diſcovered, but not being able to eſtabliſh the proofs, occaſioned the Emperor to condemn him to be the court fool.

TZUDOF.

Hard, extremely hard!——However, notwithſtanding, much more gracious than ſevere.

CYRILLA.

Oh that you already knew all my father!

TZUDOF.

What, is this not yet all?

CYRILLA.

We loved each other! our ſouls were expanded till they became but as one eſſence!——the day, even the hour was already fixed, that was to have united us for ever——when one unfortunate moment of confidence and tenderneſs————

TZUDOF.

(Springing from his ſeat.) Oh!——

CYRILLA.

(Throwing herſelf at his feet.) Pardon me my father!

TZUDOF.

TZUDOF.

Is it to this extreme that thou art capable of forgetting me?——Thy father in priſon, a victim to every deſcription of miſery, forſaken by all the world, dead for all mankind; except the miſerable wretch who betrayed the honour of his houſe, his only child, for whom alone his heart continued to beat!——and thou in this ſame moment couldeſt forget thyſelf and me ſo far, as to abandon thyſelf to guilt and diſhonour!

CYRILLA.

No, never could I forget either myſelf, or your ſufferings; that I participated the cup of ſorrow with you was the leaſt of what I did, I entreated the compaſſion and mercy of perſons in power, ſought to bribe the judges contrary to the laws, and to raiſe the voice of equity againſt that of juſtice; tried and combatted with impoſſibilities, till at length deprived of either hope or reſource——when I languiſhed out my days in diſmal ſolitude, wept and mourned through reſtleſs and horrible nights, my every thought devoted to you! And thus my father it is that I have forgotten you!

TZUDOF.

I was unthankful to my poor child. *(Raiſing her and preſſing her to his boſom.)* Forgive thy poor father!

CYRILLA.

Oh my father!

TZUDOF.

Is thy child alive? oh let me ſee thy child!

NATALIA.

Come my dear Count! you ought to be chearful, whether you feel diſpoſed for it or not. *(She leads him out.)*

SCENE IV.

An Apartment in the Emperor's Palace.

The EMPEROR, SERDJUKOW *in the character of the Court Fool, with a party-coloured coat, a fool's cap and bells, and a club; they are playing at cheſs.*

SERDJUKOW.

What pity——what a terrible pity?

EMPEROR.

Why?

SERDJUKOW.

That the pawn has no cap and bells.

EMPEROR.

Why ſo?

SERDJUKOW.

SERDJUKOW.

The cap would then be upon the king.

EMPEROR.

Is it the fool who ſpeaks thus, or——

SERDJUKOW.

The fool, the fool,——who elſe dares, but the fool!

EMPEROR.

Thou art however well acquainted with the knute.

SERDJUKOW,

(Making a low bow.) More reſpect before the knute than even before thyſelf.

EMPEROR.

Art thou drunk again?

SERDJUKOW.

Not yet, more is the pity, for I would moſt willingly drink to your *health*, and with that drown my own.

EMPEROR.

Art thou then ſuch an enemy to thy own health?

SERDJUKOW.

A moſt bitter enemy.

EMPEROR.

Since what time?

SERDJUKOW.

Ever ſince thou haſt carried on buſineſs in ſo fine a manner, as to ſend reaſon to be confin'd in mad-houſes, and to govern thy people with the knute.

EMPEROR.

There is not a more villainous thing on the face of the earth than groſs wit.

SERDJUKOW.

Nor is there a more hateful thing on the earth than the knute in the hands of a king! *(He continues playing.)* I ſhall ſend thee flying before me.

EMPEROR.

Do ſo, do ſo, and I will make the fool become a prince again.

SERDJUKOW.

(Springs up and ſhakes the cheſs-board into confuſion.) Here!

EMPEROR.

Why art thou doing that?

SERDJUKOW.

Becauſe the fool recollects that the prince never played at cheſs.

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Groſs fool!

SERDJUKOW.

It goes not one hair better with thee than with me, for thou ſuffereſt from the want of gold ever ſince thou haſt introduced œconomy into thy dominions,——and I have ſuffered from the want of wit ever ſince I have been thy fool.

EMPEROR.

Leave me!

SERDJUKOW.

With all my heart, and bite thou on this nut I have given thee, till thou haſt not a tooth left.

[*Exit.*

SCENE V.

The EMPEROR, *and* GENERAL BAUER.

BAUER.

My gracious Lord!

EMPEROR.

What wouldeſt thou have?

BAUER.

I came to ſolicit my diſmiſſion.

EMPEROR.

And what is thy reaſon for doing ſo?

BAUER.

Nothing, or what is of no more conſequence than nothing——my own will.

EMPEROR.

Without reſentment or prejudice, why wouldeſt thou quit my ſervice?

BAUER.

I am one of thoſe extraordinary mortals who can never be happy where he is too well off.

EMPEROR.

German, look me full in the face——thus, and now tell me in what inſtance thou art really too well off in my ſervice?

BAUER.

(With a half ſuppreſſed ſigh.) Ah, once I was truly well off in your Majeſty's ſervice.

EMPEROR.

And now?

BAUER.

I was then in the ſervice of the Emperor; not in that of the Field Marſhal Menzikof.

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

What wouldeſt thou ſay by that?

BAUER.

That the Field Marſhal is equally the ſervant of the Emperor with myſelf; and that the ſervant ought not to look down on the ſervant with contempt.

EMPEROR.

Knoweſt thou, that thou art accuſing this man to his friend?

BAUER.

(With indignation.) Fool that I am!—Truly the Field Marſhal is the idol of your ſoul, and I am in the wrong, becauſe I am not the Field Marſhal.

EMPEROR.

Doſt thou know with whom thou art ſpeaking?

BAUER.

With the Emperor, but the Emperor ought likewiſe to know, that I am a free man, and a German, who thinks not ſo meanly of himſelf as to ſuppoſe that he has not ſome pretenſions towards the conſideration of his Emperor.

EMPEROR.

But through what cauſe has Menzikof offended thee?

BAUER.

BAUER.

I am come to ſolicit my diſmiſſion.

EMPEROR.

Speak! I command it.

BAUER.

The Field Marſhal treats me with contempt, I was announced to him three times on weighty and preſſing affairs——and was not admitted to his preſence——three days ſince he gave an entertainment by the command of your Majeſty, and invited every officer, from the firſt to the laſt in rank, and I alone was forgotten!——yeſterday I met him and notwithſtanding this, ſaluted him as formerly, he thanked me not.——I am a German, and I underſtand much better how to deſpiſe others, than patiently to ſuffer their contempt.

EMPEROR.

Well then, old cauſtique, ſince matters are thus, come back to me again after dinner! if thou art then cool and collected, and perſiſteſt ſtill on having thy diſmiſſion, it ſhall be granted. At preſent retire. *(Bauer goes.)* As to the reſt he was a brave ſoldier, and it would vex me ſeriouſly to part with him. *(He calls, a meſſenger comes.)* Go to the arſenal. [*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE VI.

The Houſe of Prince Amilka.

AMILKA, MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

(Haſtily.) Tzudof is at liberty!

AMILKA.

I know it.

MASSALSKY.

Do you know through whom?

AMILKA.

I know that alſo.

MASSALSKY.

My papers are ſealed, and we are prepared for anſwering.

AMILKA.

And thinkeſt thou, that that will bring thee out of embarraſſment? *(Takes him by the hands, and holds him ſtedfaſtly.)* We will ſupport each other, Maſſalſky! our plan is ripe. This plan once brought into execution, and they have their anſwer.

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

For all this, am I prepared——but it was a moſt truly childiſh trick in your daughter.

AMILKA.

Perdition ſeize the traitreſs!——I will ſo well prepare her bridal bed, and ſo well ſhall ſhe find herſelf there, that ſhe'll forget ever to riſe from it again. Now we are at this extremity, all muſt yield before us;——courage Maſſalſky! courage even to madneſs; having gone one ſtep forward, we muſt ſo act as to leave no poſſibility of being thrown back on a ſecond——Peter muſt be ſtrangled this very night, elſe we ſhall come off but ſhabbily with our anſwers.

MASSALSKY.

Repoſe yourſelf on my faithfulneſs, Prince!

AMILKA.

Aſſemble thy people together again this evening; diſpoſe of every thing fully, according to our agreement, and forget not the ſmalleſt circumſtance of the plan.

MASSALSKY.

As I have already ſaid, repoſe yourſelf on my *faithfulneſs*, Prince!

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

But are the people in all things, ſuch as they ought to be?

MASSALSKY.

I think I may depend on them for being ſo!

AMILKA.

Is each raſcal then ripe for rebellion?

MASSALSKY.

Amongſt a hundred villains not one but what is, and if one made a ſearch through every palace—through every court of juſtice—and examined every robber's hole within three kingdoms—I believe you could not collect choicer ſpirits together for ſuch a purpoſe——Look through this liſt——there are juſt as many names to be found in it, as there are ſteps to the throne of Ruſſia——In fact they are moſt infernal ingredients, but notwithſtanding that, they are iron-hearted fellows——Strelitzers, ſoldiers, boyars, monks, and prieſts, bailiffs, taylors and ſhoemakers——all wrought on the forge of ſuperſtition and prejudices, all ſworn enemies to Innovation and Change——all mortified and diſcouraged through deſpotiſm.

AMILKA.

(Reads.) General Uglitz.

MASSALSKY.

He is a ſtrelitzer, and ought to have had a regiment, when he was put off for the third time.

AMILKA.

What do I ſee! Bauer? I'd have thee be on thy guard with this fellow.

MASSALSKY.

I ſhall not let him out of my ſight till our plan is put in execution——offended by the pride of the Field Marſhal, he has this day demanded his diſmiſſion.

AMILKA.

—Colonel Puſkin——

MASSALSKY.

The ſon of the formerly rich Puſkin, now in baniſhment in Siberia.

AMILKA.

The Monk Iwan——

MASSALSKY.

His benefice was retrenched two hundred rubles, he got drunk out of deſpair every day; cried out in ſecret, and openly againſt innovations, curſed, ſwore and was knuted.

AMILKA.

(After having read through the list.) —— That each of these acts well his part, be thy care!

SCENE VII.

AMILKA, MASSALSKY, *and* NATALIA.

AMILKA.

(Aside to Massalsky on seeing her coming.) Let the whole of them be assembled by midnight, here are the keys of the back garden door, and these of the secret stair case of the palace. *(Massalsky goes out.)* Is that you Princess?

NATALIA.

My father!

AMILKA.

Thou art truly a compassionate feeling creature!

NATALIA.

Disgrace not, I beseech you, the actions of duty and humanity with the unfeeling tone of raillery and jest! —— Count Tzudof suffered innocently. Do you not comprehend the fearful sense of these words, my father; it appears as if you really did

not, if I were to draw my concluſion of the matter from this cool look——and judge of the ſituation of your mind from that peaceful countenance.

AMILKA.

Oh you have performed a moſt bleſſed deed!

NATALIA.

An accident put the ſecret papers of my deceaſed huſband into my hands——and by good fortune they contained the juſtification of this poor man——what the deed had of praiſeworthy in it belonged entirely to the accident——what I have done is little more than nothing, but the little good that depended on me I have done——and what a wretch muſt I have been to have neglected it?

AMILKA.

And woe be to thee, miſerable creature, for what thou haſt done!

NATALIA.

By all what I could conclude from theſe papers——and from all I could ſee from their contents——you were acquainted with Tzudof's innocence——liſten to me my father, Tzudof's innocence was fully known to you, and you were ſilent

——you

——you kept ſilence on the matter during ten years——and perhaps in this horrid lapſe of time you never enjoyed a peaceful hour, from the reflexions this muſt have cauſed you.

AMILKA.

Thoſe uneaſy hours were more than enough——

NATALIA.

Was this truly ſo my father?

AMILKA.

Know, miſerable wretch, that Tzudof's liberty is my condemnation!

NATALIA.

Oh my God! what have I done!

AMILKA.

Struck thy father to the duſt,

NATALIA.

Heaven have mercy on me!——However no! I deſpair not.——Many a wicked crime have been repaired.

AMILKA.

Courage and reſolution——and the bad will then be made good again.

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Well my father!

AMILKA.

Thou art now become a ſignificant perſonage; come give me thy hand in engagement to forward my projects!——

NATALIA.

(With reflexion.) Are they good projects my father?

AMILKA.

And what if they were not ſtrictly good?

NATALIA.

Why then, I would ſacrifice my life for that of my father:——but to wicked projects I would never engage my hand!——Maſſalſky was with you, you ſpoke myſteriouſly with him.——Maſſalſky is a villain——and this villain was one of the confidants of my huſband——and at preſent the confidant of my father.——No! no! this can be no good project.——I read in your ſparkling eyes——and your dark, fearfully wrinkled front that it is not.——I ſee written alſo, all the horrid projects of your ſoul, in the raiſed and agitated muſcles of your face.

AMILKA.

What a pious daughter you are!.

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Are you ſtill in the humour of raillery and mocking?——By Heaven that ought you not to be—in the poſition you are; and with ſuch a heart, and ſuch a conſcience as you poſſeſs.

AMILKA.

You know me then——you are an experienced perſonage.

NATALIA.

I fear you not my father! but if my filial tenderneſs towards you could charm away your anger, then would I exert all my power to prevent you from doing what you ought not to undertake; that you might become leſs criminal againſt the ſtate——and leſs guilty before Heaven:——this would I do were I certain of becoming the victim of your baneful projects!

AMILKA.

Get thee gone!

NATALIA.

I go, but never ſhall filial duty engage me to liſten to your malevolent plans——rather will I prove myſelf an active and courageous enemy to your enterpriſes. [*Exit.*

AMILKA.

AMILKAR.

Go, miserable creature! thou hast pronounced the condemnation to thy own death.——Art thou then the first adversary, the first enemy to my views that I have known how to dispatch?

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

(An open Place on one ſide of the Emperor's Palace.)

TZUDOF, CYRILLA, *and* PETERCHEN.

CYRILLA.

YOU are fatigued my dear father! we have already walked a vaſt deal, and you will not be perſuaded to go into the carriage.

TZUDOF.

In a carriage, I ſhould not feel myſelf ſo much at liberty there——oh bleſſed liberty, my child!

CYRILLA.

Repoſe yourſelf on this ſeat then awhile. *(She ſits down.)*

TZUDOF.

(To Peterchen.) Canſt thou not play and jump about here a little?

CYRILLA.

But take care and not loſe ſight of us.

PETERCHEN.

No, mother.

TZUDOF.

(Pointing around him.) How new every thing appears to me——all is ſo brilliant, ſo great, and full of elegance——my ſoul feels itſelf elevated always at the ſight of a magnificent building ——I repreſent to myſelf in ſuch a moment, that theſe palaces muſt of courſe be inhabited by ſome man of ſublime genius.

CYRILLA.

And however 'tis a melancholy reflexion that it ſo often happens directly the contrary.

TZUDOF.

The Emperor is unqueſtionably a great man, I languiſh with deſire to ſee him, then we'd haſten to our benefactreſs, our deliverer. Ho, Peterchen come here!

PETERCHEN.

Here am I.

TZUDOF.

Doſt thou not know the Princeſs Natalia?

PETERCHEN.

I believe I do! 'tis ſhe who is always giving me ſo many fine things, and that takes me on her knee and kiſſes me, and tells me that I muſt grow up pious and good like mama——and ſhe has told me too a vaſt deal about you.

TZUDOF.

What did ſhe tell thee, my child?

PETERCHEN.

(With the tone of infantine compaſſion.) Why, that wicked men confined you in a ſavage hateful place, that was ſtill, much, much darker than night itſelf; that you were moſt dreadfully tormented and ill-treated——and very unhappy.

TZUDOF.

Oh my child! *(Kiſſes him and preſſes him to his heart.)* Go, go, Peterchen! that I may not rob thee of thy liberty.

PETERCHEN.

(Runs and jumps away, but ſoon returns again.) Look grandpapa, ſee what a droll fellow is coming there, he has got bells on his cap.

SCENE II.

TZUDOF, CYRILLA, PETERCHEN, *and* SERDJUKOW.

CYRILLA.

My God! there he is! hide me, hide me, my father!

TZUDOF.

Who?

CYRILLA.

Serdjukow.

TZUDOF.

Unfortunate creature, where haſt thou led me to?

SERDJUKOW.

(Who was going acroſs the ſtreet, but on ſeeing Cyrilla, ſtops ſhort, is much affected with the ſight of her ——during this time Peterchen jumps about him, examining him with great curioſity, and every now and then he ventures fearfully to touch him.) To whom doſt thou belong, my little fellow?

PETERCHEN.

My mother, and to whom doſt thou belong, my gaudy gentleman?

SERDJUKOW.

SERDJUKOW.

(Striking his forehead.) Ah! once I belonged to myſelf! *(Takes Peterchen by the hand.)* Who is thy mother?

PETERCHEN.

Doſt thou not ſee her ſitting there?

SERDJUKOW.

(In violent agitation.) My God!——is that then my child?——Haſt thou no father?

PETERCHEN.

What need have I of a father? I have this very day juſt got a charming, fine, brave grandfather—thou haſt got a wonderful fine, fine cap!

SERDJUKOW.

I wiſh thee no ſuch cap, child! *(Puſhing him from him.)* Go to thy mother!

PETERCHEN.

(Folding his little hands.) I pray thee, let me ſee thy cap. *(Serdjukow draws nearer, ſtoops down and kiſſes him, during which time Peterchen ſnatches the cap from his head and plays with it.)*

SERDJUKOW.

SERDJUKOW.

(*After a pause.*) Cyrilla!

CYRILLA.

Unfortunate man!

SERDJUKOW.

(*Afflicted.*) Pardon me! I have not fought thee.

CYRILLA.

Oh my father!

SERDJUKOW.

Is that thy father?

TZUDOF.

—Aye, and *you* are the cause of my not wholly rejoicing in my liberty!

SERDJUKOW.

Forgive me most venerable old man! If age has not already deadened your every sense of feeling, then I compassionate you from the bottom of my soul.

TZUDOF.

And I pity you too, most unfortunate prince!

SERDJUKOW.

Now one single look from thee, Cyrilla; hast thou forgotten me?

CYRILLA.

CYRILLA.

Never, never, ſhall I forget thee!

SERDJUKOW.

Is that my child?

CYRILLA.

Canſt thou miſtake in him the image of his father?

SERDJUKOW.

(*Lifts the child up in his arms, and looks him in the face, then preſſes him with tenderneſs to his breaſt.*) My ſon! my ſon! (*Puts him down on the ground.*) Now give me my cap again. (*Looks around him in wild grimaces.*) Heaven and hell are combined here in a ſingle thought! [*Goes haſtily away.*

PETERCHEN.

Mama, what haſt thou done to that gentleman?

TZUDOF.

Let us go from hence, I cannot remain here another inſtant. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the Emperor's Palace.

GENERAL BAUER, *alone.*

(*Walking backwards and forwards in deep reflexion.*) No, what they have done towards thee, how they have miſtaken thee, and miſuſed thee, is not a thing to be forgotten. No, never more ſhall the ingratitude of the great engage thee to any humiliating ſtep——go, old man, while there is yet time——and diſhonour not thy native country in ſtrange climes.——Yes, thy diſmiſſion and begone! ——however if previous to that thou didſt perform an exalted action, and then wenteſt away? if thou before——but haſt thou the proofs? when one would diſcover plots, and cannot bring conviction ——but wherefore ſtayeſt thou not long enough amongſt them to bring proofs ſufficient?——thou remain amongſt them? thou the only honeſt fellow, amidſt ſuch a terrible collection of raſcals and villains?——What is it then that ſcares thee, honeſt man? to find the action a fine one, and courage to perform that action, reſolution to go through with it, is it not then the ſame as done?

SCENE

SCENE IV.

BAUER *and* SERDJUKOW.

SERDJUKOW.

Thy moſt devoted ſlave, old maſter at arms!

BAUER.

I am no friend to devoted ſlaves.

SERDJUKOW.

I pray you tell me what difference there is between a fool with a club, and a fool without a club?

BAUER.

I am fit for nothing ſo little, as to ſupport the ſight of fools' faces.

SERDJUKOW.

Take good heed of the club.

BAUER.

Prattler!

SERDJUKOW.

I'll teach thee a precious ſcience.

BAUER.

Keep thy ſcience to thyſelf.

SERDJUKOW.

The art of extracting uſeful things out of the moſt execrable nonſenſe of idle praters.

BAUER.

But could I underſtand the ſcience?

SERDJUKOW.

Nothing more eaſy, only let him recount to thee the hiſtory of his life.

BAUER.

Thou ſpeakeſt very wiſely fool.

SERDJUKOW.

Doſt thou know why wiſdom in a party-coloured coat is always wiſer than wiſdom in a black coat?

BAUER.

No.

SERDJUKOW.

Becauſe *this* has the excluſive privilege of telling truth to the fools of diſtinction and power, as well as to every other deſcription of fools.

BAUER.

I ſhall ſoon be brought to ſtand in awe and veneration before wiſdom in the party-coloured coat.

SERDJUKOW.

Give me thy ſword, and I'll give thee my club.

BAUER.

Why ſo?

SERDJUKOW.

Becauſe the deſire awakens in me to fight for my country.

BAUER.

Hadſt thou never had a ſword, poor fool, thou wouldeſt not now carry a club.

SERDJUKOW.

(Striking his forehead.) Oh! *(Makes a ſpring round the room and affects chearfulneſs.)* Tell me truly now, am I not a moſt joyous fool?

BAUER.

Like one who had rather cry, when he is oblig'd to laugh.

SERDJUKOW.

I could willingly throw my cap and bells at thy head! *(Going away.)*

BAUER.

Ho! ſtop, one word more! doſt thou really love thy cap and club?

SERDJUKOW.

Old maſter at arms, thou art wanting here *(pointing to his forehead.)* If thou wert forced to draw a load, wouldeſt thou love the cart?

BAUER.

The old maſter at arms is not wanting there, my gaudy lad! I would wiſh to ſpeak with thee. Follow me, then by tomorrow thou ſhalt have neither cap nor club any more.

SERDJUKOW.

On thoſe terms I could follow thee to the gallies.

BAUER.

Wait till I have ſpoken with the Emperor.

[*Exit Serdjukow.*

SCENE V.

BAUER *and the* EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Ha! what already there, my old boy? be not then ſuch an extraordinary murmurer? it never entered into the Field Marſhal's mind to wiſh even to offend thee.

BAUER.

BAUER.

(Cold and bitter.) No?

EMPEROR.

Thou wert never announced to him, and thy name *was* amongſt thoſe of the liſt of officers invited. *(Shewing it to him.)* Convince thyſelf.

BAUER.

I ſee it.

EMPEROR.

The Field Marſhal expects that thou wilt do him the juſtice not to lay the failures of his ſervants as crimes on himſelf, neither does he remember having met thee in the ſtreets ſome days ago.

BAUER.

I am his moſt obedient ſervant.——After this faſhion *I* may well be obliged to beg pardon of the Field Marſhal!

EMPEROR.

(With emphaſis.) That is a matter of courſe.

BAUER.

The Field Marſhal is in the right, becauſe 'tis an eaſy matter for him to be in the right; and I am in the wrong, becauſe I have not the good fortune to be the Field Marſhal———I pray your Majeſty to grant me my diſmiſſion.

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Haſt thou made no better deliberation than that?

BAUER.

I entered into this country a *free man*, and a free man I would fain return to my native land.

EMPEROR.

Thou haſt thy diſmiſſion. *(Calls and gives the meſſenger a ſign, then walks back and addreſſes himſelf to Bauer.)* Stay yet a moment! *(The meſſenger returns, and brings the ribbon of an order with a paper on a ſalver.)* I now thank thee for thy paſt ſervices. Here is thy diſmiſſion, more than once haſt thou ſhed thy blood, and hazarded thy life for my ſtates. Once more I thank thee, yet it ſhall not be ſaid of me, although even none can dare call me to queſtion for it, that I have unjuſtly let merit depart from me unacknowledged and unrecompenſed. *(Puts the ribbon of an order on him.)* Knight of the holy order of Saint Andrew! thou haſt no reaſon to be aſhamed of becoming a member of this little ſociety of brave men———*(Preſents him a paper.)* Here is a bond for the annual payment of four hundred rubles, go now where it ſhall be moſt agreeable to you! preſerve your health——farewel. *(Going.)*

BAUER.

BAUER.

(Recovers a little from his ſurprize, haſtens after the Emperor, and throws himſelf at his feet.) May it pleaſe your Majeſty!

EMPEROR.

What will'ſt thou have more?

BAUER.

Pardon!

EMPEROR.

Riſe!

BAUER.

Take all back again from a worthleſs man.

EMPEROR.

It is the reward of merit.

BAUER.

Now then anew, and forever, will I ſhed my blood, and hazard my life in the ſervice of my Emperor. *(Kiſſes the Emperor's hand.)*

EMPEROR.

Leave that!

BAUER.

The ſtrayed ſon of the good father!

EMPEROR.

(Gives him a hearty ſhake of the hand.) This man has few equals!

SCENE VI.

BAUER, *the* EMPEROR, *and* MENZIKOF.

(During this Scene the Emperor is occupied at a Table with Papers.)

BAUER.

(Going to meet Menzikof.) My Lord Field Marſhal, I have greatly injured you.

MENZIKOF.

(Taking him by the hand.) Welcome, General!

BAUER.

Forgive me my Lord Field Marſhal, I have greatly injured you.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

A ſimple miſunderſtanding, General!——ſimple miſunderſtandings muſt not be allowed to divide two men, who would elſe, and in all things ever have the higheſt eſteem and friendſhip for each other.

BAUER.

(*Aſide.*) He underſtands how to work the right way on the old hot-head.

MENZIKOF.

It muſt be well known to yourſelf General, how very ſincerely I have it at heart, to let foreigners of merit (when they wiſh to return to their own country) depart with the higheſt and moſt honourable diſtinctions, as well as with the moſt favourable impreſſions of the ſervice they have quitted. His Majeſty invites worthy and eſtimable men, by the greateſt offers into his dominions, that he may extract ſcience, and profit from their talents and wiſe plans; that alſo in the courſe of time they will become an example that our wild uncultivated Ruſſians will be zealous to imitate.——How then can any man pretend, that while I ſee things under this point of view, I could have the folly to wiſh men diſcarded who are ſo highly valuable and precious to the ſtate, or that I ſhould be ſo far want-

ing in duty to the Emperor, as thus openly to counteract his wiſe projects?

BAUER.

You have found the ſecret of turning all my reſentments on myſelf, Field Marſhal!

MENZIKOF.

Too much precipitation is all I can lay to your charge, General.——Accident and circumſtances juſtify your conjectures. Let this trifle be forgotten by us. The glorious reflexion, that we ſerve ſuch a ſtate and ſuch a prince, that we ſtand on high, cloathed with the power of operating good towards humanity; and that we tread the theatre of Fame and Immortality together, ſhould once for all baniſh all rancour from our ſouls——and conduct us towards every elevated path, and ſublime action——and where alſo the ſouls of divided friends ſhall meet each other again. (*Embraces him.*)

BAUER.

Young man, you have made me aſhamed of myſelf!——Truly you are an admirable ſchoolmaſter for old boys.

MENZIKOF.

Tomorrow, I entreat you to be my gueſt.

BAUER.

BAUER.

Tomorrow?——Well, be it ſo Field Marſhal, tomorrow I can perhaps diſcloſe ſome weighty matters to you. (*He goes out bowing to the Emperor.*) Your Majeſty!

EMPEROR.

Servus, old Bramarbas! I rejoice moſt ſincerely that thou canſt remain amongſt us! (*Exit Bauer.*)

SCENE VII.

The EMPEROR *and* MENZIKOF.

EMPEROR.

(*After a pauſe, ſtands up and takes Menzikof amicably by the hand.*) Art thou thinking on thy Natalia?

MENZIKOF.

The very ſame.

EMPEROR.

And wherefore that with a ſigh?

MENZIKOF.

I feel as if my whole exiſtence was abſorbed in the enchantment of bliſs——between the joys of love and friendſhip!

EMPEROR.

A great ſoul like thine is ſuſceptible of inexpreſſible bliſs. My paſſion is now healed, and I can ſay cooly and ſtedfaſtly, with tranquility of mind, that ſhe is the moſt perfect of her ſex!——take her and be happy!

MENZIKOF.

Your Majeſty!

EMPEROR.

We are now alone——what prevents us from indulging our ſouls in the harmony of a ſweet fraternal converſation?

MENZIKOF.

My Peter! my friend!

EMPEROR.

But will not thy friend ſtand in danger of loſing his friend through the all gentle and tender friend!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

No, that ſhall he not!

EMPEROR.

However the bonds in which thou art now about to enter, are very differently proportioned.

MENZIKOF.

I muſt totally forget myſelf in the moment that could make me indifferent to ſuch a friend——when I could be ſo far loſt, I muſt forget what you are to me——and what through you I am.

EMPEROR.

I had a fine leiſure ſolitary morning to day——my ſpirit loſt itſelf in the moſt pleaſing reveries. I thought on my own, and thy deſtiny; the beginning and progreſs of our friendſhip——and on that melancholy time, when like the reſt of the world, I was perſuaded that a prince can have no real friend.

MENZIKOF.

Princes are humane and noble. *(Falling on the Emperor's neck.)* Let them look and learn from my Peter, how in the heart of one's friend, one muſt forget the pride of princes!

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Often ſwims before mine eyes the flattering image of generous friendſhip——then do I willingly hold converſation with thoſe great men of antiquity, who had ſo ſublime a conception of the value of real friendſhip; ſo much enjoyment of the charms of life; ſo many incitements to all what was good and great; and who found under every kind of misfortune ſo much conſolation and ſtrength in the confidential participation of a friend whoſe ſoul was congenial with their own—I then burſt forth with redoubled ardour the deſire I had ever felt of binding myſelf in the bonds of brotherly affection, with ſome man of great and ſublime qualities——this deſire became ever more and more irreſiſtible within me——I ſearched throughout my own dominions, wandered openly and incog. through half Europe; and found many whom I could not but juſtly value——whom ſpite of my pride and and ſelf-reſiſtance I muſt approve——yet not one amongſt the whole could I find capable of filling that great and painful vacuity in my ſoul——or of whom I could internally ſay " This is my *heart's* " *brother.*"

MENZIKOF.

Oh Peter! if I could be that to thee!

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Yet when thou, as the lively paſtry-cook's boy, with thy open and aſſured countenance wert wont to paſs by ſinging thy joyous ſong; thy careleſs affability, thy ſurpriſing actions, thy penetrating ſpirit——thy character in all things ſo full of promiſe, awoke in me all the ſtrength of paternal affection————I ſaid within myſelf even at this time, there lies inconteſtibly in this boy the latent ſhoots of future greatneſs——I took thee into my own poſſeſſion, educated thee as the beloved ſon of a tender father——and thou improvedſt after my heart's deſire——thy underſtanding developed itſelf more and more, each day rendered thee dearer to me——and with each day thou madeſt ſtill a nearer progreſs towards my heart.

MENZIKOF.

What a wonderful man is my Sovereign!

EMPEROR.

At length we underſtood, and reached the reciprocal ſentiments of each other————then was my confidence in thee without bounds; thus I found in thee, that friend I had ſo long ſought in vain, and hope now thus hand in hand, and heart in heart to walk on through all the dark and doubtful paſ-

ſages

ſages of this life——and go forwards together to meet a glorious immortality, if thou———

MENZIKOF.

What an abomination of ingratitude, what a perjured and faithleſs monſter muſt I be———

BMPEROR.

I could build rocks and mountains on the foundation of thy virtues!——I need them! in the hour of headſtrong paſſion; when one labours againſt the ſtorm, the heart of a wife and prudent friend is always the ſureſt haven. Alexander, abandon me not in the hour of paſſion!

MENZIKOF.

Oh my Sovereign, my Peter, my friend!

EMPEROR.

What a ſtrange man am I! I have more than once reflected thoroughly on myſelf, I love and abhor myſelf——nature has exhibited a great excentricity in me———

MENZIKOF.

One of the greateſt men of the preſent age——

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Nature muſt have compoſed me of very extraordinary materials, becauſe I find every poſſible contradiction in myſelf——I am at once ſo good and ſo bad——

MENZIKOF.

You have the moſt magnificent projects, and the moſt benevolent actions to ſet in oppoſition to your weakneſſes.

EMPEROR.

What terrible moments have I in my life——with wild ferocity many a time the pride of my ſoul ariſes——then the miſerable dreamer fancies he ſees himſelf deified by the admiring world——and that the ſun ſerves him for his throne——and that the moon is his footſtool——

MENZIKOF.

'Till the fruſtration of our projects bends us low to earth again.

EMPEROR.

Then oft times the petulance of revenge trembles through my every limb. Rage, anger and madneſs runs through my whole frame like a whirl-

wind of consuming fire. One single villain is sufficient to make me take the entire world in abhorrence——in such a moment I would fain have the blood of all mankind collected in one cup——that in an instant I might dash it to the ground and assuage the thirst of my fury.

MENZIKOF.

'Tis certain that you are subject to very terrible moments, but your extreme desperation once composed, renders such moments not wholly useless to you.

SCENE VIII.

The EMPEROR, TZUDOF, CYRILLA, *and* PETERCHEN.

EMPEROR.

(In the beginning of the scene the Emperor is alone, sitting at a table strewed over with papers.) Thou wouldest justify thyself Amilka! truly it comes rather unseasonably——I fear thy justification will turn out very ill, and bring alarms and misery over thy house——'tis really very unseasonable——if sparing thee were possible thou wouldest have to

thank thy daughter for it——but it can ſcarcely be poſſible.

TZUDOF.

(Coming ſlowly towards the Emperor.) Your Majeſty!

EMPEROR.

(Surpriſed.) Ha!——What do I ſee——art thou him?——art thou Tzudof? *(Riſing and taking him by the hand.)* Welcome to me, old man.

TZUDOF.

Ten years of impriſonment, a ten years ſuffering of affliction innocently!

EMPEROR.

Forgive! and demand ſatisfaction!

CYRILLA.

Generous ſovereign!

TZUDOF.

Forgiveneſs, yes forgiveneſs to you, and juſtice; would that I could forget it too.

EMPEROR.

I thank thee, old man, I heartily thank thee! and now for thy ſatisfaction?

TZUDOF.

I am at liberty! oh there is no treaſure on the face of the earth equal to that thought: I have my liberty!

EMPEROR.

But thy ſatisfaction——demand what thou will'ſt! ſpare me not!

TZUDOF.

Thoſe who ſtill ſuffer impriſonment are many ——ah! perhaps amongſt the number there may be found thoſe who ſuffer innocently.——(*Folding his hands.*) Great Emperor, think on the innocent who languiſh in priſon!

EMPEROR.

I thank thee for thy remembrance, that I will moſt ſurely do!——but thy own ſatisfaction?

TZUDOF.

To one who has languiſhed out ſo many years of perſecution in a lamentable dungeon, it is not a kingdom can repay him for the torments of ten ſuch years! Think then only, great Sovereign, that with three words you could alleviate the miſery of ſuch wretched men! Grant me but one petition,

petition, and you will have given me all the ſatiſfaction I deſire.

EMPEROR.

Speak!

TZUDOF.

Let your priſoners no longer be the ſport of wanton cruelty——give them to the direction of men of character, and integrity.

EMPEROR.

(Embracing him.) Noble and venerable old man! ——Villains and traitors walk around me with impunity, whilſt Virtue and Innocence are periſhing in dungeons.——Oh the fearful lot of princes!—Be comforted, old man; thou ſhalt yet ſee thyſelf moſt completely revenged on thy enemy.

TZUDOF.

I comprehend you not, my gracious Sovereign!

EMPEROR.

Knoweſt thou not then thy enemy, thy deſtroyer? Thou werſt too honourable for Amilka's projects.

TZUDOF,

TZUDOF.

Amilka? thus then it is true——Amilka!——My God!

EMPEROR.

(Going to call.) He ſhall have a guard immediately.

CYRILLA.

(Falls on her knees.) For the love of God, my gracious Sovereign!

TZUDOF.

My benefactreſs, my deliverer was his daughter.

CYRILLA.

Has ſhe then ſtruck the chains off the hands of my father, to lock them on thoſe of her own?

TZUDOF.

(Falls on his knees.) Spare then the father, for the ſake of the daughter's virtues!

EMPEROR.

(With emphaſis.) That cannot be!

CYRILLA.

CYRILLA.

Suſpend his puniſhment at leaſt.

TZUDOF.

If it could but be ſuſpended till tomorrow!

EMPEROR.

Why ſo?

TZUDOF.

That I might yet have time to weep out the thankfulneſs of my heart at Natalia's feet——ere that excellent woman had cauſe to curſe my liberty——But till the morning, let me ſupplicate your Majeſty!

EMPEROR.

(*Reflects a little.*) This petition——well, it ſhall be granted to you! [*Exit.*

TZUDOF.

Come my daughter!——My God, what a future is opening itſelf to my view! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE IX.

(A Salloon in Amilka's Summer Palace.)

AMILKA, *alone.*

How happy that man ought to eſteem himſelf who has combatted for the higheſt degree of liberty and attained it, and who has ſteeled his heart againſt every kind of tender impreſſion.—How tranquil was I while the plan ripened within me for the deſtruction of the traitreſs! How compoſed have I been while occupied with the purſuit of this project!——I have in like manner broken thoſe bands aſunder by which we were bound by nature.——SHE IS NOW A SOLITARY STRANGER——torn and ſeparated for ever from me——'tis now that all goes well with me. I triumph within myſelf to think I have been capable of ſuch firmneſs and reſolution——that nothing leſs than my own ruin ſhould move me from the unchangeable reſolve I have made for the deſtruction of her, who was once my own fleſh and blood.

SCENE

SCENE X.

AMILKA *and* MASSALSKY.

AMILKA.

Thou art come in a good time!——my plan has taken another turn——'tis now reſolved that Peter ſhall be ſtrangled this night.

MASSALSKY.

It ſhall be ſo, Prince!

AMILKA.

But when it is enquired who ſtrangled him?

MASSALSKY.

Then ſome perſon muſt have done the deed who is accuſtomed to be near him——a meſſenger—or an——

AMILKA.

No, Maſſalſky! I attain probably a hundred views by one ſingle means——the ſuſpicion muſt fall moſt heavily on thoſe who ſtand the moſt in our way.

MASSALSKY.

And thoſe are——

AMILKA.

Menzikof and my daughter.

MASSALSKY.

Prince!

AMILKA.

Perfect revenge, Maſſalſky, or none.

MASSALSKY.

But Prince——

AMILKA.

Both muſt be together in the play—but after ſuch a manner, that we ſhall be the actors, and they the victims.

MASSALSKY.

Moſt excellent prince, but——

AMILKA.

What ſceptic!——when if this very night they ſhould both with their own hand ſign the confederation oath, art thou ſatisfied then?

MASSALSKY.

Then I ſhall be more than ſatisfied, prince.

AMILKA.

He, whoſe origin was that of a ſlave, a beggar, the baſtard of a miſerable paſtry-cook, ſhall he reign over Ruſſia? Muſt princes, and the mighty men of the Ruſſian empire bow themſelves ſlaviſhly before him? Down with him!

MASSALSKY.

Down with him!——but how prince? Take care of yourſelf!—he is uſually held to be a man who has a vaſt hold on the ſenſes of the people, who are ſo paſſionately attached to him that you may in vain endeavour to waſh him out of their good opinions.

AMILKA.

Ha, ha, ha!——there exiſts a tincture, Maſſalſky, with which a man may make the midnight appear as clear as noon-day, convert ſtars into ſuns, and transform devils into angels. When this operates, the whole order of nature is inverted; virtues become execrable, and crimes, beautiful and enchanting as the ſmiles of voluptuouſneſs.——

MASSALSKY.

I am convinced of the greatneſs of your abilities, prince! however——

AMILKA.

Sceptic, draw near to this nominal great and enterpriſing man——he is commonly one half leſs than his ſhadow——how ſimply have I not already ſeen this great man Menzikof appear!——Once he ſpake of conſtancy of mind, and contempt of danger, of unſhaken courage under each change of fortune with all the haughty boaſting of a philoſopher of ancient Greece; and a quarter of an hour after I ſaw the ſage ſtoic whining and ſobbing at my daughter's feet, diſſolved into the moſt lamentable love. He was Oſſodar's ſworn enemy, becauſe this poſſeſſed too much pride to range himſelf amongſt the number of his idolators.——What more did it coſt this man than two or three pieces of well applied flattery to win his favour again, and through him to become a general in the guards; and by this manœuvre enabled himſelf to proſecute our plan to the utmoſt of our deſires?——Can one do otherwiſe than laugh, when ſpite of the Emperor's boſom friendſhip for him, that one ſees him in all the contortions of rage and jealouſy, if the Emperor meets but my daughter's eyes with a complacent

placent ſmile? Does either pleaſure or melancholy ſeduce him to the overflowing bowl, he is ſurely overcome——Then the ſtoick, the hero, the friend and partner ſovereign of the Emperor, talks nonſenſe, ſtammers and liſps till we ſee him fall to the ground.

MASSALSKY.

You have well ſtudied your man, I perceive.

AMILKA.

I ſhould have had it leſs in my power to play on him, if a goblet of wine had not already made him act ſo fooliſh a part!——but I have ſworn his fall, Maſſalſky——and he is fallen!

MASSALSKY.

'Tis my wiſh, prince!

AMILKA.

Sweet trophies of my victory!——this very night will I raiſe *you* up on the ruins of *his* greatneſs.

MASSALSKY.

I will ſing you ſongs on your victory, Prince!

AMILKA.

Thou ſhalt be an eye-witneſs! This night will I offer

I offer up to him every thing that can either charm or ſeduce the paſſions of his body or ſoul!——till I have wrought him on to raiſe a revolt himſelf.

MASSALSKY.

You go the right way to it.

AMILKA.

Wine, muſic, flattery and love:——knoweſt thou not theſe enchanting, almighty tyrants over the minds of men? Gods alike with men bow before their thrones!—and ſhall this execrable, miſbegotten, ſurreptitious monſter of princely favour ſtand erect?! Oh thy ſenſes muſt forſake thee Maſſalſky if thou couldeſt ſee all that——the ſweet ſmiler ſhall enchant him; a fine band of ſoft celeſtial muſic ſhall be prepared to tickle his ſenſes, till his ſoul becomes enflamed by high tumultuous ſounds to the reſolve of enterpriſe——The inſpiring power of wine ſhall then corrupt his virtue, and drown his principles——the ſweet *incenſe* of flattery ſhall riſe like a vapour and cloud his underſtanding. Exaltations of praiſe ſhall deafen his reaſon, till he neither hears, feels, ſees, thinks on aught but himſelf, and thus, from the maze of intoxication, from the height of extacy ſhall he fall into the gulf of deſtruction.

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

Excellent prince! ——devilish great, I could almoſt ſay.

AMILKA.

When once I have him at the point where he ſhould be——then at once he goes from Heaven to Hell—from the very pinnacle of tranſport and joy down headlong to the bottomleſs-pit of deſpair: fanned up in him to a clear blazing flame, rage, revenge and corruption ſhall be zealous to purſue the murderer of a King and brother.

MASSALSKY.

You make me almoſt afraid of myſelf.

AMILKA.

But, how go on the preparations?

MASSALSKY.

As well as you could yourſelf with them to do.

AMILKA.

What think my people of me?

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

I fain would have enforcell'd them with your name, but I already found them all wrought up to the point I wished to lead them to!—Tell me, prince, in what manner you could have acted to gain the confidence of the multitude as you have done?

AMILKA.

How dost thou understand the thing?

MASSALSKY.

All that were enemies to innovation and change hang on you, hope in you, and adore you——all name you the prudent, the wise, the penetrating, the pious, the benevolent and friendly Amilka—— *(With a confident smile.)* And all these manifold virtues comprised in one, you surely have not!

AMILKA.

It were much easier to possess them in reality—than to feign the possession much longer.——Go, and forget not how near we are to the end of our task. [*Exit Massalsky.*

SCENE

SCENE XI.

AMILKA *and* MENZIKOF.

AMILKA.

(Going to the door to meet him.) Pardon me Field Marſhal! for my having requeſted you to come here!—We are on the point of making a very near connexion——before the concluſion of which, there are matters of great importance on which I wiſh to converſe with you.

MENZIKOF.

I am prepared to hear you, Prince!

AMILKA.

I am confident, Field Marſhal, that you will not take it amiſs in me, that I have an anxious care in the fate of my daughter.

MENZIKOF.

Natalia is worthy of your whole tenderneſs, worthy of your exhauſting for her every poſſible care and diſcretion.

AMILKA.

Your ſentiments on that ſubject are exactly conformable to my own.——But you are but of very obſcure extraction, Field Marſhal!

MENZIKOF.

What would you allude to by that?

AMILKA.

I would ſpeak your panegyric by it—I am proud of you. For ſince Ruſſia has exiſted, and as long as Ruſſia ſhall remain, there will never any other man riſe from the duſt of lowlineſs to ſuch an elevated point of power and grandeur.

MENZIKOF.

But whence all this? would you make me bluſh by it?

AMILKA.

Bluſh? would you then bluſh over the truth before one with whom you have lived on ſuch a confidential footing?——Field Marſhal, whom this day I may call my ſon, let me expand my whole ſoul before you—let me declare to you all what you may read in my countenance!——Oh nature could have made

made a moſt excellent change——nay, ought to have made!

MENZIKOF.

How ſo, Prince?

AMILKA.

To have placed Menzikof in Peter's ſtead:—truly 'tis a bold thought; but, however, a beautiful and a tranſporting one!

MENZIKOF.

You are in jeſt, Prince! and truly between jeſt and high treaſon, I ſee no medium here——However, to the cauſe.

AMILKA.

You are without fortune, Field Marſhal!

MENZIKOF.

You knew that before now.

AMILKA.

True it is, you might be the uncircumſcribed ſovereign of a principality, if your refined delicacy and diſintereſtedneſs did not make you prefer being great and poor.

MENZIKOF.

Have I not already more than I have occaſion for?

AMILKA.

'Till now more than ſufficient; but from henceforward——if I am anxious for my daughter, why ſhould I not alſo for my deſcendants?

MENZIKOF.

The Emperor is my friend:—— is that not more to you, than all the riches poſſible?

AMILKA.

You occupy the moſt dangerous poſt in the world, Field Marſhal!——Prince's favour——

MENZIKOF.

You inſult me, if I was but a common courtier in your eſtimation, but Peter is my friend, his word is of longer duration than a bubble——his principles are not founded on the froth of the ſea.

AMILKA.

In this I will not pretend to contradict you——but you have enemies, Field Marſhal, as powerful as they are rancorous—enemies who with envious

teeth are ever gnawing at the roots of your grandeur. Your friendſhip with the Emperor may be as cordial, and ſtand on as firm a baſis as it pleaſes ——but notwithſtanding——

MENZIKOF.

Truly you are going too far.

AMILKA.

You muſt ere now have ſtudied the hiſtory of human nature, at leaſt ſo far as not to deny the poſſibility of the fact, and it may well be permitted to the father of ſo exemplary a daughter, to be cautious of all poſſible occurrences——You ſhall moſt certainly have my daughter, poor or rich, whichever you may chance to be——and now promiſe me, Field Marſhal, that if the Emperor ſhould be pleaſed to offer you a principality for your wedding preſent, that you will accept it.

MENZIKOF.

I entreat you——ſpare me!

AMILKA.

Comprehend me right, however, I demand not that you ſhould beg it of him——he will moſt certainly offer it to you of himſelf—Peter gives willingly

lingly where he is indebted, and I ſpeak very moderately when I ſay that Peter is indebted to you ten principalities.

MENZIKOF.

Your flatteries, Prince——

AMILKA.

I know how dangerous it is to ſay any thing in your praiſe, becauſe your great modeſty is ſo often accuſtomed to lay unſuſpicious praiſe to the ſcore of flattery——you will permit me however to announce your intended marriage to the Emperor.

MENZIKOF.

I have already done that.

AMILKA.

That makes it no leſs my duty to do ſo; it ſhould now be your work to make me behold the Emperor with different eyes——that I ſhould be in admiration of him——that I ſhould love him——I go now to him, farewell, Field Marſhal.

MENZIKOF.

(Aſide.) What would I now give to know if thou ſpeakeſt this ſeriouſly from thy ſoul, Amilka!

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

(To Natalia whom he meets at the door.) Not a ſyllable to be ſpoken of what paſſed between ourſelves! [*Exit.*

SCENE XII.

MENZIKOF *and* NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Menzikof!

MENZIKOF.

(Taking her in his arms) Natalia!

NATALIA.

How inexpreſſibly happy am I poſſeſſed of thy love!

MENZIKOF.

And my exiſtence ſeems multiplied by the poſſeſſion of thy heart!

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Oh when with the regard of unſpeakable affection I meaſure thy greatneſs, and that I can ſay thou art mine, that I can repoſe myſelf on thy heart——

MENZIKOF.

Natalia——

NATALIA.

Then am I elevated above all the earth——and am an object of envy to the very gods.——I fancy within myſelf that I am deified in this world below.

MENZIKOF.

Oh moſt immortal day of my exiſtence——at length thou art arrived!

NATALIA.

The unquiet affectionate woman, with every apprehenſion of inconſtancy, has longed with aſpiring wiſhes for this bliſsful day. *(Looks ſtedfaſtly on him.)* There are two ſublimely great men in Ruſſia—— Menzikof and Peter!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Sweet flatterer!

NATALIA.

What wonderful men you are! you charm the taſte, diſguiſe the truth, and poiſon the ſentiments. ——I know nothing more terrible than inhumanity, nothing more diſgraceful than the deſire of revenge. Both of ye have your fatal moments! yet however I pardon myſelf——pardon myſelf from the bottom of my ſoul when I ſtill muſt find this ſavage ſo inexpreſſibly amiable.

MENZIKOF.

What an agreeable turn thou canſt give to bitter truths!

NATALIA.

Bitterneſs was far from me——I ſpoke in the fullneſs of my heart!

MENZIKOF.

Peter wiſhed thee joy.

NATALIA.

I ſpoke with him myſelf; he ſaw me as he was coming from the arſenal, and came to meet me, I

wiſh you joy, ſaid he——there is but one man ſhould rob me of thy heart——nor is there but this one man to whom I would grant Natalia—he took both my hands, then caſt a look on me and purſued his way.

MENZIKOF.

Natalia!

NATALIA.

What apprehenſions my beloved?

MENZIKOF.

Thou wert cautious however?

NATALIA.

And even if I had not?

MENZIKOF.

Oh one is never leſs——

NATALIA.

Than?

MENZIKOF.

Than when one is anxious to be ſo.——Did thy hand return his preſſure?

NATALIA.

I ſtood before my Sovereign.

MENZIKOF.

Did thy ſmile meet his regards?

NATALIA.

The moſt tranquil ſentiments of gratitude.

MENZIKOF.

What ſaideſt thou to him?

NATALIA.

That we ſhould never forget our having received our happineſs from his hands.

MENZIKOF.

And then didſt thou go?

NATALIA.

Yes.

MENZIKOF.

And hadſt thou no anſwer to ſuch flattering complaiſance?

NATALIA.

Becauſe I believe that no anſwer here was the moſt intelligible.

MENZIKOF.

Forgive me moſt charming woman.

NATALIA.

What is there that one ſooner forgives, than jealouſies cauſed by love?

MENZIKOF.

And what is often better founded than theſe? Here Natalia are the rocks on which the iron bands of friendſhip ſo often give way; here does faith become a traitreſs, and fraternal love an affaſſin!

NATALIA.

Thou art dreaming, Alexander.

MENZIKOF.

The weakneſſes of great men are fearful things.

NATALIA.

(*Pointing to her heart.*) Is not this a pledge ſufficient for thee?

MENZIKOF.

That Peter loved thee, and that he muſt have combatted with himſelf to have been able to forget thee, is a truth:——I muſt firſt bear the reflexion of all this.

NATALIA.

Thou art really ſerious——come along with me into the garden! where this heart ſo overflowing with unconquerable tenderneſs for thee ſhall chace away all the dark clouds from my brain——come Alexander! [*Exeunt arm in arm.*

THE END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Evening, the Garden of Prince Amilka.

AMILKA *alone.*

(Speaking to Perſons within the Scenes.)

THERE, there, ſomething farther back; a little deeper within the ſhrubs! have attention to the ſignal, for when you ought to ſtrike up! call forth to your aid all the magic of your ſcience! for I am the man who knows how to gild each ſoft and raviſhing tone you draw from your inſtruments with treaſures of gold.——Keep yourſelves in readineſs! ——ha! there they go arm in arm, wholly abſorbed in the dreams of joy and pleaſure; ye are ſo bleſt——ſo aſſured——ye miſerable creatures!

[*Exit.*

SCENE

SCENE II.

MENZIKOF *and* NATALIA.

(Coming from the oppoſite Side.)

MENZIKOF.

Away with all melancholy out of thy ſoul!

NATALIA.

Aſſured and careleſs dares Natalia thus to repoſe herſelf on thy boſom? Whilſt my father?

MENZIKOF.

How ought I to interpret theſe tormenting apprehenſions for thy father?

NATALIA.

Ah!—at preſent I will not ſay a ſyllable more; at leaſt not to-day!—Very ſoon perhaps he may ſtand in need of thy protection!

MENZIKOF.

Then he ſhall have it. Is not the fate of the father inſeparable from that of the daughter?

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

In thy protection lies conſolation, repoſe, and ſurety!——this makes me again ſuſceptible to the enjoyments of this delicious evening.——What a charming obſcurity! what ſolemn ſtillneſs!—— 'Tis the moſt lively image of the ſublime and ſolitary greatneſs of elevated ſouls!

MENZIKOF.

Natalia!

NATALIA.

To mé every thing is new, and ſuch as I have never felt before.

MENZIKOF.

And to me no leſs ſo.

NATALIA.

(*Pointing to her heart.*) Here is the ſeat of that overflowing tranſport——here it palpitates—and crowds and preſſes on to find itſelf a paſſage!—— then again I feel as if it had got air—and that it flowed in ſtreams from every aperture of my heart.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

How is it that thou haſt found the means of making my ſpirit the echo to every turn and voice of thy humour?

NATALIA.

Oh Alexander——a lordly creation opens itſelf to our view!

MENZIKOF.

Immeaſurable proſpects!

NATALIA.

(*Pointing to her boſom.*) Here am I fully ſenſible of thy worth!

MENZIKOF.

We are indeed in a moſt enviable poſition, to be diſtinguiſhed amongſt ſo great a number of brave and valuable men; to be beloved by one's Sovereign and one's country——and above all, to be cloathed with that plenitude of power, which ſet on its proper baſis enables one to perform the works of benevolence in ſo extenſive a circle around one ——whilſt one prepares one's ſelf for immortality! at ſuch a thought as this one's very ſoul palpitates with delight——one's whole feelings become en-

flamed, and one's ſpirit is elevated above the Heavens.

NATALIA.

When thy country adores thee, the whole world applauds thee——Peter's friendſhip, heart and fame is divided with thee!—ha! then comes foremoſt the moſt enviable privilege, and I call out, Back with you all, whoever ye are, for he is mine! *(Preſſing him to her boſom with earneſtneſs.)* MINE!

MENZIKOF.

Natalia!

NATALIA.

Mine!

MENZIKOF.

Wouldeſt thou overpower me with bliſs already on our bridal day?

NATALIA.

I would hold the mirror of truth before thee——look into it and ſee the harmonious arrangement of all our future days.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

The harmony of our days! *(Muſic is heard.)* What a delectable ſurprize! *(The muſic plays a moſt raviſhing adagio.)* Beautiful and ſoft!

NATALIA.

It accords preciſely with the ſentiments of our hearts.

MENZIKOF.

Great and ſublime!

NATALIA.

Like the ſoul of a benevolent hero!

MENZIKOF.

The tones change and melt into each other moſt enchantingly!

NATALIA.

Like the ſweet-toned voice of ſoft nature!

MENZIKOF.

If muſic was matter, it ſhould be that from which the ſouls of mankind ought to be formed——and really if one wiſhed to die in gladneſs and joy——

one ought to have muſic to accompany one on the bed of death!

NATALIA.

What a love-ſick reverie!

MENZIKOF.

Muſic and love, love and muſic—bleſt with theſe, needs one any other Heaven? *(The muſic ceaſes.)*

NATALIA.

And however, often has been the time when innocence and virtue has been charmed into the moſt dangerous ſlumbers through the power of muſic!——Frequently has unguarded virtue died a gentle death by liſtening to the Syren's ſong.

MENZIKOF.

'Tis a juſt remark——but how came this at preſent into thy head?

NATALIA.

I ſcarcely know myſelf!——but there is a villain whom I know that weeps at the ſound of muſic——and who can laugh at the lamentations of oppreſſion and miſery; who orders muſic to play when

when he would work himself up to some deed of barbarity——and that his soul is not yet sufficiently thirsty of blood; who through the power of music destroys the innocent, and enflames the minds of villains up to the resolution, of rebellion and assassination.

SCENE III.

MENZIKOF, NATALIA *and* AMILKA.

AMILKA.

Your love seeks solitude, children!

NATALIA.

That we may be more highly sensible of our happiness.

AMILKA.

Are you most truly happy?

MENZIKOF.

Heaven knows that we are!

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

May Heaven bleſs you then, and make you great, glorify you in your children, and children's children! and may the riſing family of Menzikof ſhoot up like cedars over the head of that of Amilka! (*With a ſigh.*) Oh my children I have had a glorious dream about you, a moſt glorious dream.——It is vaniſhed——but be cheerful, I will not ſpoil the joys of this evening, I will rather conſtrain myſelf and be cheerful with you.

MENZIKOF.

Conſtraint and joy——truly, the two things on earth moſt uncongenial to each other!

AMILKA.

Be tranquil, my children, and repoſe yourſelves on me! I'll deſtroy no joys——the gueſts are waiting for us.

MENZIKOF.

What gueſts?

AMILKA.

You know two of them already——and you need only ſée the other to know him alſo——the ſenator Maſſalſky.——

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

A man of abilities, and of courſe your friend.

AMILKA.

Prince Oſſodar——

MENZIKOF.

And wherefore him?

AMILKA.

You are however reconciled with him, Field Marſhal.

MENZIKOF.

Yes!

AMILKA.

The moſt ardent of his wiſhes, now is to come near to your heart again——a bare reconciliation does not ſufficiently ſatisfy his feelings——he invited himſelf here——and choſe premeditately the opportunity of ſo ſolemn an hour, an hour in which the ſoul is more than ordinarily ſuſceptible of refined ſentiments——of the warmth of friendſhip.

MENZIKOF.

He is welcome to me!

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

And the high prieſt Killian, a fine choice ſpirit, a man moulded entirely after the faſhion of the great world, and before whom one can ſay any thing one pleaſes——an admirer, an idolator of yourſelf. Neither was it wholly without a view that I invited this man, who, when he pronounces the benediction over you and my daughter——he will not pronounce it through cold ceremony, but from the fullneſs of his heart.

MENZIKOF.

I thank you prince; tho' I muſt confeſs myſelf on this point contrary to the cuſtoms of the country——I regard no ceremony farther than as a bare ceremony———

AMILKA.

I know you have your prejudices againſt the church.

MENZIKOF.

Not ſo many prejudices againſt it, as in Ruſſia they have for it——however, for your ſake this gueſt ſhall be welcome to me alſo!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

(A Saloon in Amilka's Summer Palace.)

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY *and* KILLIAN.

MASSALSKY.

Look me for once full in the face, father Killian, without blushing!

KILLIAN.

That I'll do, without blushing.

MASSALSKY.

Now tell me, father Killian, how many times you studied through your Bible before you became so complete a villain as you now are?

KILLIAN.

I was already so perfect there, that I needed no Bible to complete me.

MASSALSKY.

Father Killian ſeldom remains an anſwer in one's debt.——But Prince! ha, Prince!

OSSODAR.

(Who during this time was in deep thought.) What would you have?

MASSALSKY.

What ails you?

OSSODAR.

I was occupied with the part I have to act.

MASSALSKY.

Rather unſeaſonably!

OSSODAR.

Let your care be to perform yours as well, as I am anxious to execute mine.

SCENE

SCENE V.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, AMILKA *and* MENZIKOF.

AMILKA.

Here, my Lord Field Marſhal, are three of my friends, who are all equally worthy of the honour of your acquaintance, as they were ardent in their deſire for the favourable moment of being known to you.——

MENZIKOF.

They are welcome to me!

(On both ſides paſs bows and ſilent compliments.)

AMILKA.

Who wiſhing to partake of the joys of the preſent evening with us, were ambitious of becoming your and my gueſts.——I muſt now leave you for a few moments——but ſhall return immediately with my daughter. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, *and* MENZIKOF.

OSSODAR.

Forgive me, my Lord Field Marſhal, this wears the appearance of my having intruded myſelf into this little feſtival——and in fact too it may not be far otherwiſe——'Tis a matter that I have much at heart, and I think you can have it no leſs ſo—— that we ſhould approach each other more nearly.

MENZIKOF.

And has not that already happened?

OSSODAR.

And I have the confidence to believe it will happen ſtill more; my heart has many times made the painful reflexion, that it has not yet wholly happened—moſt true it is that you with unexampled generoſity have pardoned me a multitude of offences, that you have promoted me to the moſt brilliant poſts, that you have newly cleared out the path for me towards the active ſervice of my country.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

I could almoſt ſay that you make me aſhamed of myſelf, Prince!

OSSODAR.

Really that is much, very much——and really more than I merit;——but——forgive the unſatisfied beggar, who poſſeſſes not yet all he aſpires to!——your heart Field Marſhal I would fain have! for your own ſake I wiſh to poſſeſs it again! I have great and weighty matters to reveal to you! but am not altogether certain before I have regained your eſteem and confidence whether I ought to be moſt diſcreet or open hearted.

MENZIKOF.

Oſſodar! Oſſodar! *(Embracing him tenderly.)* dear faithful companion of my youth! thou art now become thyſelf again! thou art now mine again.

OSSODAR.

I am proud of your love, this love makes me proud of myſelf again, I am now in the favourable ſituation of returning it to you, and of binding you for ever to me; but let us devote this evening to joy and pleaſure! and to-morrow to the work.

You

You will then be aſtoniſhed, Field Marſhal! will thank me, and bleſs the happy moment in which you found your friend Oſſodar again! As I have already ſaid, to-morrow to the work! *(Pointing to Maſſalſky.)* You ſee there a man that we ſtand in need of, whoſe heart and head combines ſuch rare qualities as to render him abſolutely neceſſary! but learn firſt of all to know him, then you'll ſay yourſelf—this man muſt be ours.

MENZIKOF.

(Taking Maſſalſky by the hand.) Senator, you are heartily welcome to me.

MASSALSKY.

The moment, my Lord Field Marſhal, that aſſures me of your favour ſhall be accounted as the moſt fortunate of my life, and to attain it has been the conſtant ambition of my mind for theſe ſeveral years paſt. This epoch, I flatter myſelf, is now at hand. What I would impart to you in common with Prince Oſſodar, is without doubt of the higheſt importance; but beſides this I have projects to lay before you, that are the fruits of long ſtudy, and the reſult of many experiences by men of underſtanding and well proved ability——which promiſe the higheſt advantages, were they once adopted

ed by a benevolent man who had power and influence to protect them——I will exhibit these projects, if they then meet your approbation you can take them under your paternal care, and protect them againſt envy and cabal. I flatter myſelf that in your wiſdom we have diſcovered the only channel through which our efforts could find their true end anſwered.

MENZIKOF.

Your acquaintance is moſt deſirable to me ſenator, I ſhall preſent you to the Emperor; our Sovereign has occaſion of ſuch men as you are.

KILLIAN.

Was I not apprehenſive, my Lord Field Marſhal, that you are accuſtomed to cenſure the man who ſtands before you merely on account of the habit he wears, I would then profit of this favourable occaſion by ſpeaking in its favour.

MENZIKOF.

Independant of any conſideration of habit or profeſſion, every man of integrity has a claim on my eſteem.

KILLIAN.

KILLIAN.

I have remarked, my Lord Field Marſhal, and perhaps have had a better opportunity of remarking it nearly, than a hundred others, that the church for as much as it makes a moſt eſſential object of radical reform to the Emperor, is ſtill more the cauſe of diſſenſions from a divided clergy, than from the aſſemblage of its ſtates; patriotiſm and the philoſophy of religion has excited me to find out methods and rules by which one might wholly diſarm the dangerous fanaticiſms of prieſthood, and make its influence advantageous to the welfare of the ſtates, and leſs deſtructive to the morals of the people——grant me but the favour, my Lord Field Marſhal, of ſome convenient occaſion, and I will preſume to ſpeak to you more amply on this affair.

MENZIKOF.

In two days at fartheſt I ſhall beg you to come to me, when I ſhall rejoice in having found under the habit of a Ruſſian prieſt, a man in whoſe profeſſion one ſo ſeldom ſees combined, patriotiſm, an enlightened mind, ſerenity of character, and a love of extending the truth.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, MENZIKOF, NATALIA *and* AMILKA.

(During the converſation the ſervants bring tables and chairs, and ſet down wine and glaſſes.)

AMILKA.

Well, Field Marſhal, are you ſatisfied with your ſociety?

MENZIKOF.

Perfectly ſo, Prince! *(Preſenting Natalia to the company.)* Here my friends, behold in this lovely woman my happineſs, my joy, my bliſs!

(Natalia takes from the ſervant a ſalver full of glaſſes, and preſents it to each gueſt.)

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY *and* KILLIAN.

(All drinking the health in the ſame moment.) Long live this noble and amiable pair! *(They now ſit all round the table, when each perſon takes his glaſs, A-*

milka is ever anxious that Menzikof's ſhall not be empty.)

OSSODAR.

Peter is a very great man; ye are great, fortunate and beloved! which of ye is the moſt to be envied?

KILLIAN.

May Heaven pour down the choiceſt of its bleſſings on your heads, moſt noble and loving pair!

AMILKA.

Father's bleſſings pierce their way more rapidly through the clouds than prieſtly bleſſings:——I ſay amen!

MENZIKOF.

(Drinks.) Long live our Emperor! *(Drinks again.)* Long live our father, Ruſſia's Peter!

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY *and* KILLIAN.

(Drinking all at once.) Long live the noble bride and bridegroom, Menzikof!

MENZIKOF.

I drank to the Emperor's health.

OSSODAR.

OSSODAR.

And we drank to yours!

MENZIKOF.

(Pouring out a glaſs.) Long live Peter!

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY *and* KILLIAN.

(Drinking.) Long live Menzikof and Peter! once more, long live Menzikof and Peter!

MENZIKOF.

(Riſing up haſtily.) You forget yourſelves, my friends!

NATALIA.

(Gently pulling him back.) They are rejoicing with us, and what is more forgetful of duty than joy?

MASSALSKY.

We honour our Emperor in you, Field Marſhal!

OSSODAR.

In his aſſociate, his boſom friend!

MENZIKOF.

Let it pafs then! *(Drinks.)* To your health my friends!——*(To Amilka.)* That ſeemed the ſigh from a mortified, and oppreſſed heart! what ails you, Prince!

AMILKA.

Forgive me, Field Marſhal, I could not drink with you.

MENZIKOF.

I had not remarked that.

AMILKA.

Healths ought to proceed from the bottom of the heart;——healths ſhould——*(Affecting melancholy.)* Oh my daughter!——

MENZIKOF.

What can this mean, Prince?

AMILKA.

(Striking his forehead.) Sentimental, feeling ideot that I am!——'tis paſt now. *(Drinks.)* I'll lay you any wager that I'll out drink you all now!

MENZIKOF.

You drink to chace away melancholy!

AMILKA.

But as I ſaid 'tis now paſſed over! and for your ſake I will not deſtroy the pleaſures of this evening——

MENZIKOF.

What can be the preciſe ſignification of this?

AMILKA.

You, and I, and all of us!

MENZIKOF.

You are vaſtly myſterious!

AMILKA.

Well then ſince you would have me no longer ſo——*(Cautiouſly explaining himſelf.)* I have been with the Emperor, and ventured to ſpeak to him of your marriage——

MENZIKOF.

And what were the conſequences of that?

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

The Emperor must have believed that I waited on him out of mere ceremony, and regarded the affair in the beginning as a simple ceremony, he accordingly wished you both joy! *(Menzikof and Natalia rise up and draw near to each other.)* He could not have been in the best humour.

MENZIKOF.

Why not?

AMILKA.

I believed I was saying a matter of importance to him, and he heard me with a neglectful indifference—with a coldness, Field Marshal, that had a somewhat in it that exceeded cold indifference.

MENZIKOF.

We do not always happen to see things in the light they really are.

AMILKA.

That may possibly be, but believe me on my word, Field Marshal, that the Emperor was through and through cold at this news——colder than ice itself. *(They drink.)*

AMILKA.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

He entered into it, in the moſt unconſtrained, moſt unprejudiced manner——with the nobleſt, and moſt generous friendſhip.

MASSALSKY.

This appears to throw a new light however, on what is whiſpered in ſecret, and openly, both within and without the court.

MENZIKOF.

And that is——

MASSALSKY.

That the Emperor throughout has not been ſatisfied with your marriage.

MENZIKOF.

In idea, nothing farther than in idea! *(Drinks now, and continues to take full bumpers.)*

OSSODAR.

Nothing leſs than in idea, Field Marſhal——for yeſterday immediately after this period he was very particular in his attention to the high treaſurer.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Well, and what of that?

OSSODAR.

It is equal to his declaring openly that he is not ſatisfied with this marriage——that Menzikof will be in diſgrace; that——and ſince we are amongſt ourſelves——that the angelic Princeſs Natalia ought to have waited for more favourable circumſtances.

MENZIKOF.

(With emphaſis.) The Emperor has not ſaid that!

OSSODAR.

You forget yourſelf, Prince! *(With aſſurance.)* Yes, the Emperor really has ſaid it!——and know with it, Field Marſhal, that you may get yourſelf aſſured of *it*, and perhaps *more* ſtill from the high treaſurer himſelf! he is your friend, and truly not a little concerned for you on the occaſion——

AMILKA.

(Slow and criticiſing.) That the Princeſs Natalia ought to have waited more favourable circumſtances!

(Menzikof's growing uneaſineſs becomes apparent.)

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

God is witneſs for me, I know no wiſh for more favourable circumſtances!

MENZIKOF.

Natalia!

AMILKA.

I have not yet reached the end of my account, I occaſionally touched on the point on which I was ſpeaking to you, to the Emperor.

MENZIKOF.

(His humour breaking out.) I have ſaid to you, have entreated of you on that head——and however——

AMILKA.

What extraordinary warmth, Field Marſhal, I touched him on the aforeſaid article, with that degree of caution, with which you could ſcarcely have been capable of mentioning it yourſelf——he fully underſtood me, before I had ſaid three words on the matter——made a conſiderable pauſe as if fixed to the place, and appeared to be in deep reflexion, then he took me by the hand, and ſaid with a tone of the moſt important anxiety; What I

have done Prince, what I have doubly, triply——tenfold done——and what I would yet heap on him if he would not think of marrying your daughter; but from conſcience, and from cauſes that are known to myſelf alone, I cannot do more for him if he marries your daughter, even if he ſhould caſt himſelf at my feet to entreat it of me.

MENZIKOF.

Reflect a little, Prince!

AMILKA.

Oh I reflect moſt maturely, for no man has more cauſe for reflexion than myſelf.

MENZIKOF.

Once more I repeat, that the Emperor has not ſaid that.

AMILKA.

As ſure as I am a nobleman of Ruſſia, he has ſaid it! his perſonal phyſician was by at the time. I am no liar, Field Marſhal——*(Riſing up and ſeizing his hand.)* My honour is offended, come with me to the Emperor, I inſiſt on it!——I have pride, and a nice ſenſe of honour, I would ſet my head at ſtake where my honour comes in queſtion, to

have juſtice done to my honour and veracity! Once more, come with me to the Emperor!

MENZIKOF.

(In deſpair.) I have not the courage——*(Aſide after a pauſe.)* I have a tempeſt raging within me!

AMILKA.

My dear, my now above all things beloved Field Marſhal!——what wonderful and glorious dreams have I formerly had of you.

MENZIKOF.

Dreams, is that all!

AMILKA.

Do you not ſtill remember the herculean labours of two months, which you ſo happily brought to perfection, to the eternal honour and greatneſs of Ruſſia. The great reform that was introduced into the conſtitution of the courts of juſtice; the raiſing up of commerce with an inconceivable rapidity——the œconomy of the navy laid out in a well underſtood and regular plan, the army moſt eſſentially improved, negociations made with foreign powers, treaties made, and alliances eſtabliſhed; the Swedes humiliated ſo far as to become

the voluntary tools of our cabinet, the pride of the barbarous Porte humbled, the ſubdued Poles neceſſitated to make great ſacrifices to the Germans to obtain a peace with us——and our friendſhip with France——one's ſpirits are in a perfect vertigo when one but barely thinks on all this——that ſuch mighty things were the work of one man, and that this monſtrous work was compleated in two months——

MENZIKOF.

Another time is better for this, Prince.

AMILKA.

Peter ſaw all this, felt all that he owed you, and was once in a confidential ſociety of men in which he ſaid, "I know of no other means of recompenſing him, but that of raiſing him to an equality with myſelf."

OSSODAR.

I was preſent.

AMILKA.

And I too.

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

The preſident of the ſupreme court of juſtice recounted the ſame to me. There went abroad at this time ſo much diſcourſe about the matter, as to occaſion ſome very extraordinary explanations.

AMILKA.

Oftentimes I reaſon with myſelf on you, and your ſervices to the Emperor, and I try to repreſent to myſelf the limits of this vaſt Empire, the ſcale and extent of it exceeds all bounds; then your conduct, your friendſhip with the Emperor, the cordial and unlimited confidence he has in you, which makes him delegate to you all the difficulties and cares of the crown, reſerving to himſelf *it's enjoyments alone*; when again I take a review of the coloſſal magnitude of the Ruſſian Empire, which muſt finally ſuffer from the weight of its own greatneſs;——then there ariſes before my mind's eye a picture——a picture Field Marſhal, that preſented itſelf ſo inceſſantly to my view for many days——till my buſy fancy painted it ever more and more beautiful, till——we are at preſent amongſt ourſelves; there is ſuch a beautiful ſolemnity, in this evening——the ſociety ſo open-hearted and confidential;——let me finiſh my picture!——

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Let me entreat you Prince to ſpare me from it!

OSSODAR.

And we beſeech you to make it perfect!

AMILKA.

Peter makes a diſtant province of Ruſſia, an independant ſovereignty——preſents it to his friend Menzikof, our ſecond Emperor, ſets the crown on his head, makes him at once his equal in dignity and elevation, as he already has been his equal in heart, in ſentiments, in occupations, and in brilliant actions.

MENZIKOF.

Such a thought as that, never once entered my ſoul!

AMILKA.

Alexander Menzikof is then the Solon of this age, makes his country great and happy through his wiſe laws; extends the purity of morals, manly exerciſes, and propriety of manners amongſt his people, raiſes his flouriſhing ſtate by the power of his own might; binds and chains the hearts of his people with Ruſſia by an eternal alliance——now

is

is Ruſſia become actually tremendous; now may Europe entire, tremble threefold before it, even within her own entrenchments!—for ALEXANDER the confederate hero, the lawgiver, the beloved and adored king——the huſband of my daughter!——my ſon!————but oh how ſuddenly, how ungently did Peter's ice-cold hand ſcare me out of this moſt delectable dream, to day.

(At theſe words Menzikof ſtands up, pours out a glaſs, then walks backwards and forwards in great diſcompoſure.)

QSSODAR.

To ſpeak ſincerely to you Amilka, your dream has thrown me into diſcord!

(All riſe up.)

NATALIA.

(Taking Menzikof by the hand.) What is the matter with thee, Alexander?

MENZIKOF.

Nothing! thy love ever crowns me! and with this I am happier and more to be envied than a king!

(Amilka

(Amilka during this time gives a ſign, a quick, lively exciting muſic ſtrikes up in the next apartment.)

MENZIKOF.

(Riſes to the greateſt degree of inquietude, Natalia fixes her whole attention on him, when ſuddenly he cries out.) Away, let us away, my ſoul grows wild!

AMILKA.

Stop Field Marſhal, I cannot let you quit us in ſuch a perturbation of mind.

NATALIA.

Stay with me Alexander! where art thou in greater ſafety, where more beloved than in the arms of affection?

(A ſervant comes in.)

AMILKA.

What wouldeſt thou have?

SERVANT.

A Moor from the court inſiſts on coming in and ſpeaking with the princeſs.

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

Let him come in!

SERVANT.

(*Goes out and returns immediately.*) He muſt ſpeak with her alone! It appears to be ſomething of great moment.

(*Amilka goes out and returns with the Moor.*)

SCENE VIII.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, MENZIKOF, NATALIA, AMILKA, *and the* MOOR.

AMILKA.

Amongſt us there are no ſecrets——come, out with thy buſineſs!——What wouldeſt thou have?

MOOR.

(*Putting himſelf in embarraſſment.*) I? Nothing—or in fact, but very little. (*Drawing near to Natalia, endeavours to preſent her with a letter unſeen.*) There!——quickly, before any one remarks it.

NATALIA.

(Loud.) Shameleſs wretch!——

MOOR.

(As before.) It is from the Emperor; know that a letter from the Emperor is a thing not to be deſpiſed. *(Forces her to receive the letter, and then retires.)*

SCENE IX.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, MENZIKOF, NATALIA, *and* AMILKA.

NATALIA.

(Loud to Amilka and Menzikof.) A letter from the Emperor!

AMILKA.

I wiſh you joy! *(While Natalia breaks the ſeal.)* This letter is of ſome importance.——Do you not believe ſo yourſelf, Field Marſhal——that the Emperor has perhaps been conſulting within himſelf, that perhaps he——what's the matter with thee, my child?——thou art turned ſo pale——

NATALIA.

Scandalous treachery!

AMILKA.

What are the contents of the letter?

NATALIA.

(With apprehenſion and extreme embarraſſment.) Heaven is witneſs for me that I am innocent!

AMILKA.

Unpleaſant news, my daughter?——Shew me the letter. *(Takes it himſelf out of her hand.)*

NATALIA.

(Sinks down in a fainting fit.) God!

AMILKA.

Ah my daughter!——Help! help!——here, read it the while, Field Marſhal! *(He occupies himſelf with Natalia.)*

MENZIKOF.

(After reading it, ſtares wildly about as if out of his ſenſes.) His hand! his hand!——Treachery! aſſaſſination!——his hand!

AMILKA.

My child!——ah! ſhe's dead——

MENZIKOF.

Be not alarmed, old man! I have a balſam for her, that ſhall ſoon charm her back to life again. (*Takes her by the hand, then with diſſimulated rage and a muffled tone of voice.*) It was a moſt delicious evening when the friendly bower hid us in her obſcurity——oh what a bliſsful thought Alexander, ſaideſt thou, to fold thee thus in my arms! (*Shakes her by the hand.*) Does not then the balſam operate? ——Then have I a thunder that ſhall roar thee back to life! (*With rage, ever raiſing the tone of his voice.*) It was yeſterday that the Emperor lay in thy arms, and thou ſaideſt to him in the delirium of thy joy, what exquiſite bliſs it was, to have him in thy arms!

AMILKA.

In the name of God, tell me what has happened!

MENZIKOF.

Give her poiſon, or elſe you will make me contaminate my honour by ſhedding the blood of this ſerpent.

AMILKA.

(*To the attendants.*) Carry her out!

(*Natalia is borne out.*)

SCENE X.

OSSODAR, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, MENZIKOF, *and* AMILKA.

MENZIKOF.

(*To Amilka.*) Read that, if thou art not the *mercury* of thy daughter.

AMILKA.

(*Reads.*) " Natalia, moſt amiable of thy ſex! " yeſterday was the moſt bliſsful day of my life " ——for I lay in thy arms, and thou aſſuredeſt " me it was exquiſite bliſs to have me there—— " this day on which I thought your heart was cer- " tainly mine, you give your hand to another—— " when in a ſhort time I ſhould have participated " my throne with you! Truly, Princeſs, you are " not diſcreet——and will bring me to madneſs.

" YOUR PETER."

Oh

Oh the ſcandal and diſhonour this brings down on my grey hair!

MENZIKOF.

Ha, the traitor is on the throne.

OSSODAR.

Without you, without his friend, Peter would not be the Peter, nor would Ruſſia be the Ruſſia ſhe is!

MASSALSKY.

——Think only on the paſſage by Syſterbeck,

KILLIAN.

And on the bloody action at Kaliſch,

OSSODAR.

And on the thundering battle at Pultawa——: there it was, where like a very god your delivering arm preſerved the life of the Emperor, and ſpoke decidedly over the fate of Ruſſia.

MENZIKOF.

The ungrateful, the hypocrite, the parricide!

KILLIAN.

KILLIAN.

Who, but for a few moments ſtill, before this, could have believed it!

MENZIKOF.

You are weeping, my friends, and I feel as if flames were burſting forth from my eyes!

AMILKA.

Think then, that you have men before you!

MENZIKOF.

Rage, ſedition and madneſs—I am prepared for all——would ye that I ſhould deſtroy like the exterminating angel?——a ſword, and one night ——then Peterſburg ſwims in her own blood before the morning!

AMILKA.

Horridly miſuſed man!

MENZIKOF.

Oh that I had him in this inſtant, I'd drag the crowned monſter by the hair of his head, would daſh him againſt the walls, would trample him under my feet, and feaſt with unſatiable deſire on his agonies,

agonies, his ſobs and lamentations, till thus under the moſt tedious and diſgraceful death I ſaw the cowardly aſſaſſin periſh——

AMILKA.

You are inſulted, I am alſo with you! I bind myſelf to you, our right——

MENZIKOF.

Cold-blooded ideot, who can ſtand calmly here, to harangue on right!

AMILKA.

Our right, Field Marſhal, our right is blood!

ALL.

Blood! blood! is your right!

(They all ſurround Menzikof, during which is a pauſe and a variety of grimaces.)

MENZIKOF.

Ye men, why ſtand ye there looking on each other!

AMILKA.

(*To Oſſodar.*) What ails you Prince?

OSSODAR.

OSSODAR.

There paſſes wonderful matters in review within me——

AMILKA.

And thou, Maſſalſky, what goes over thy tongue ——Father Killian, your ſoul is labouring, and foraſmuch as I can ſee, not on the why and wherefore of a nut-ſhell.

OSSODAR.

Brother!

AMILKA.

Blood and life, one for all, and all for one!

ALL.

(*Taking hands, and ſpeaking at once.*) One for all, and all for one!

OSSODAR.

Blood! blood!

AMILKA.

Let us ſtrangle the tyrant!

(*All, except Menzikof.*) He ſhall die!

AMILKA.

Menzikof——

MENZIKOF.

(*After a pauſe.*) He ſhall die!

AMILKA.

Oh joy for us all! let us put our ſeal of alliance fully on this, Field Marſhal.

MENZIKOF.

What would ye have?

AMILKA.

Three words on this paper.

MENZIKOF.

I underſtand you——(*Writes.*) Here!

OSSODAR.

Ha! now comes an hour!——

MENZIKOF.

And the traitor is no more!

[*Exeunt Menzikof and Oſſodar.*

SCENE

SCENE XI.

AMILKA, MASSALSKY, *and* KILLIAN.

MASSALSKY.

Make but once the trial, Prince, and lay the devil's ſnare! I'll bet my ſoul on it that he falls.

AMILKA.

Are all the papers prepared?

MASSALSKY.

Here they are! ſo different in their contents, and ſo like in their form, as one egg is to another.

AMILKA.

That's well, I'll bring my daughter! a moment at preſent is worth a hundred years! [*Exit Amilka.*

SCENE XII.

MASSALSKY *and* KILLIAN.

KILLIAN.

It goes on well, excellently well; but my affairs are not altogether ſo well.

MASSALSKY.

Take it not amiſs in me, Father Killian, when I ſay, you are a haresfoot, a poltroon——

KILLIAN.

My buſineſs is to give in good projects——and now I have compleated my miſſion, your affair is to look to yourſelves——

MASSALSKY.

——And that one muſt ſuffer you to return to your houſe?

KILLIAN.

It is indeed very late.

MASSALSKY.

That is not to be thought on, Father Killian! we ſhall have farther occaſion of your ſervices, you are the cleverest *ſpy* in the whole world. Beſides, no one knows the receſſes and hidden corners about the court ſo well as yourſelf——as I have already ſaid, Father Killian, you muſt abſolutely remain! and then if we ſhould ſucceed to the end of the buſineſs, why you will ſpare the watch the fatigue of ſearching long after you.

KILLIAN.

What! can you ſtill jeſt on!

SCENE XIII.

MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, AMILKA, NATALIA, *behind them* GENERAL BAUER, *afterwards the moſt diſtinguiſhed of the Conſpirators, who remain ſtanding in the back ground.*

AMILKA.

(*Conducts Natalia to a table on the ſide.*) We have more than one cauſe for avoiding any great *eclat* ——thanks to our friends who are bound in alliance with me to decide on the matter out of hand! Was it not poſſible to convince the Field Marſhal of thy innocence, and the incorruptible faithfulneſs of thy heart; then the ſucceſs of it depends greatly on thy own eloquence, to caſt the whole of this black crime back on the Emperor——his love for thee is more ardent than ever——he preſſed me ſo cloſely to bring the marriage contract to a concluſion this day——that he might then have it in his own power to celebrate the marriage to-morrow ——how abſolutely neceſſary is it to all, how much the proſperity, the deliverance of thy father depends on thy ſpeedy marriage with the Field Marſhal, *thou* knoweſt as well as I——! Here read this, (*Preſents her with a paper.*)

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Oh I am very ſick! (*After having read the paper, ſhe gives it back to her father, Bauer during this time gets behind her fauteul that he may the better be enabled to obſerve what paſſes.*)

AMILKA.

Well, now will'ſt thou ſign it?

NATALIA.

Ah, if it needed nothing farther than ſigning! ——who can blame me for my mind's miſgiving me ſo far as to its execution?

AMILKA.

(*Changes the firſt paper with one exactly reſembling it, and lays it before her, ſhe ſigns.*) Return now to reſt!

NATALIA.

I have much need of repoſe; but ah! it will never come to me!

SCENE

SCENE XIV.

AMILKA, MASSALSKY, KILLIAN, GENERAL BAUER, *and* CONSPIRATORS.

AMILKA.

(To the conſpirators.) My friends, you are fully informed of all the contents?

CONSPIRATORS.

Of all.

AMILKA.

Your names then, if you pleaſe, under the confederation-oath!——*(They all write their names on the paper Natalia has ſigned, till it comes to the turn of Bauer.)*

AMILKA.

Have you all ſigned?

MASSALSKY.

(After having looked through the liſt of names.) None but General Bauer's name is wanting.

AMILKA.

And wherefore have you not ſigned?

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

Is not the order of Saint Andrew to blame for it?——the Emperor dignified him with the order this morning, to prevent him from running away.

AMILKA.

Sign, I ſay! (*Bauer ſtands reſolutely and unmoved, Maſſalſky opens the middle door, one ſees vaſt numbers of the Conſpirators in great motion, ſome of whom preſs and crowd forwards into the apartment.*) A traitor amongſt us! ſeize him!

BAUER.

(*With his ſword drawn.*) Let none of you dare approach me! (*They ſeize him from behind, and diſarm him.*)

AMILKA.

Bind him hand and foot! caſt him into a ſubterraneous dungeon—but kill him not. I will execute juſtice on him myſelf. (*Bauer is dragged away.*) Now friends and brethren, to the cauſe!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE XV.

(An Apartment in the Emperor's Palace, in the back Ground appears a Door leading to the Emperor's Closet.)

SERDJUKOW, *alone.*

(Seeks the key of the closet-door.) The door is locked. *(Peeps through the aperture of the key-hole.)* 'Tis already midnight, and he's still at his writing table! I was to secure the key of the principal door—that I have already done. The old master at arms said that I was to wait for him here; but wherefore does he not come? Tomorrow he said I should have neither club nor cap——however he does not come!——*(Throws himself into a chair.)* Benevolent midnight! thou hidest me from the insulting scorn and mockery of the great; oh that thou hadst also the power of hiding me from myself!——and from my being compelled to act the Fool! Oh the very thought of it alone has half metamorphosed me into an ideot!——Fool and Prince! Prince and Fool are for ever the catch-words amongst the courtiers to awaken my sorrows!

——Ha! what prevents thee in this moment—— in this very inſtant, to do a deed through whoſe power, the Fool ſhall forget the Prince—and the Prince forget the Fool to all eternity? This inſtant —(*With ſinking courage.*) Oh nature! what a coward haſt thou made me againſt myſelf! Cowardice! was I formerly acquainted with this word? and now?— oh all fools muſt inevitably be cowards!——the ſcene of this morning has perfected it, has unmanned me, has borne me down to the weakneſs of a woman in lamentation——a glorious ſpectacle:—— the child playing with the fool's cap of his father.

SCENE XVI.

SERDJUKOW, *and the* MOOR.

MOOR.

(*Sliding in, and in deep reflexion within himſelf, a murmuring and whiſpering is heard from behind the ſcenes, he calls to the place it proceeds from.*) Be ſilent there with your womaniſh goſſip. (*To Serdjukow.*) Ha! what art thou there, princely fool?

SERDJUKOW.

What wouldeſt thou be doing here at this midnight hour?

MOOR.

MOOR.

Wiſh thee a good night.

SERDJUKOW.

Let me look thee full in the face.

MOOR.

I counſel thee not to look me too cloſely in the face.

SERDJUKOW.

(*Curious.*) Thou art not alone!

MOOR.

Quite alone, upon my ſoul.

SERDJUKOW.

The thought happens to ſtrike me, that thou art groping about here to execute the plan of ſome black deed.

MOOR.

Thy life is dear to me, for thou makeſt ſport for me, and pure fun gives me pleaſure;—thou haſt once ſaved me from the knute too, thus thou ſeeſt that I cannot forget it——and I counſel thee, if thou wouldeſt not be ſpitted through and through

like roaſt meat, to keep thyſelf out of the way of meeting with ſuch an adventure, ſo, in with thyſelf, I ſay!

SRRDJUKOW.

I underſtand thee! [*Exit.*

SCENE XVII.

The MOOR, MASSALSKY, *with a multitude of the Conſpirators.*

The Conſpirators, carrying ſome dark Lanthorns, others Rope-Ladders, and other things.

MASSALSKY.

(*Separating the people.*) Keep you a good watch at all the corners and outlets of the palace, and down with whoever comes in your way, and fix your ſcaling ladders——*you* remain here by my ſide!——(*Draws out a ſilken rope.*) Poor Peter, thou art named a great man; let us now ſee if thy greatneſs cannot be meaſured with this cord!——(*Attempts to go in at the door.*) It is locked! but it is in vain that doors and gates are bolted againſt DES-

TINY and Us——force it open! ſtand a little farther off; ſo——now make an effort. (*They attack it in vain.*)

MOOR.

(*Peeping through the key-hole.*) There's ſome movement within——they are coming——

MASSALSKY.

(*Preſenting him with a dagger.*) There!——quickly! when he comes out, and that I am ſpeaking with him, from behind!

MOOR.

I underſtand you.

SCENE XVIII.

The MOOR, MASSALSKY, *with a multitude of the Conſpirators, and the* EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

(*With compoſure and dignity.*) What would ye have?

(*The Conſpirators are ſeized with a panic fear, and run off.*)

MASSALSKY.

MASSALSKY.

All hail to our mighty Emperor!——revolt my gracious Lord——rebellion——*(Goes towards the window.)* There ſee in the ſtreets what multitudes of people are riſen.——

(Whilſt the Emperor goes to the window, the Moor approaches his back with the dagger drawn.)

SCENE XIX.

The MOOR, MASSALSKY, EMPEROR, *and* MENZIKOF, *with armed men.*

MENZIKOF.

(Burſting into the apartment.) Stop, villain! *(He ſeizes the Moor by the collar and throws him on the ground, Maſſalſky flies, the Moor riſes again and eſcapes too.)* Away after the fugitives! fly!——purſue!——ſearch through every hole and corner of the palace!——*(To the Emperor.)* Are you wounded?——oh joy for me and all Ruſſia, you are not wounded!

EMPEROR.

My friend!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(Trembling and confounded.) Nor has your Majeſty ſuffered any ill from this?

EMPEROR.

(With vexation.) Thou well knoweſt, Alexander, what I have already done for my people! every means is exhauſted——I have temporiſed, pardoned, recompenced, raiſed, puniſhed, tyrannized: ——but all in vain——I love them, they hate me; thoſe to whom I granted my confidence have gone into conſpiracies againſt me; thoſe whom I have overwhelmed with favours have become aſſaſſins to murder their friend and father in the dark. *(After a pauſe with a degree of conſolation.)* Did the ſatisfaction of a good conſcience not repay us, did not the hope of a future world recompence us, did one not find greater and nobler ſentiments in the boſom of incorruptible friendſhip——to put in a balance againſt the bulk of mankind——but really they are ſcarcely worth being conſidered as human beings—My friend! thou confidant of my ſoul, my brother!

MENZIKOF.

You embrace me——you can——away, away! ——*(Breaks looſe from him.)* Heaven guard me!

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Menzikof!

MENZIKOF.

(Caſts his ſword, and the ribbon of his order from him.) Oh that the earth would open and ſwallow me up!——that the clouds would fall to hide me!

EMPEROR.

(With aſtoniſhment.) What is the matter with thee Alexander?

MENZIKOF.

(In the voice of deſpair.) I am a parricide!

EMPEROR.

Thou!

MENZIKOF.

Am guilty of high treaſon againſt my Sovereign!

EMPEROR.

Thou!

MENZIKOF.

This accurſed hand has ſigned againſt me.

EMPEROR.

Miſerable!——*(Throwing himſelf into a chair.)* Friendſhip, thou too art a phantom without real exiſtence?——*(Riſes and draws near to Menzikof.)* The Dukedom of Ingria was deſtined to thee as a marriage gift:——*(Humiliated.)*—whilſt thou wert a traitor to thy Sovereign and thy friend? [*Exit.*

MENZIKOF.

(In all the geſticulations of agony and deſpair.) Who will deliver me from myſelf?——who will annihilate me? [*Exit.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

(An Apartment in the Field Marſhal's Houſe.)

NATALIA, *alone.*

(Burſting into the Apartment with diſhevelled hair and all the geſticulations of horror and anxiety!)

ALEXANDER!——ALEXANDER!——No ſoul here?——*(More anxiouſly.)* Alexander!——where art thou? I ſeek thee, call ſo loud that the cries of my deſperation muſt reſound to the moſt diſtant parts of the houſe——and thou heareſt me not?

SCENE II.

NATALIA *and* MENZIKOF.

NATALIA.

(Meeting him.) Oh art thou there, my treaſure, my love, my life?

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(*Diſengaging himſelf from her.*) Back!

NATALIA.

(*With ſurpriſe.*) Alexander!

MENZIKOF.

You are ſtill free!

NATALIA.

Free?

MENZIKOF.

Serpent!

NATALIA.

I? (*Conſcious.*) Alexander! (*After a pauſe with a melancholy and deſolate exclamation.*) Who will deliver me! (*Falls on her knees.*) Menzikof!——

MENZIKOF.

Woman, what wouldeſt thou ſtill undertake to—

NATALIA.

My father in chains; Peterſburg in an inſurrection; I abandoned by all——and thou ſpurneſt thy love from thee?

MENZIKOF.

Love——

NATALIA.

By thy name I know nothing more ſacred than it:——ſpurn not the poor forſaken woman who implores thy ſupport and conſolation——thy poor wife from thee!——no word?——not one look?——Oh one look from thee would ſupport and comfort me——and muſt I in vain ſue for pity, when I am ſinking with miſery and affliction at thy feet! *(Riſes and approaches him.)* Menzikof, what am I then in thy eyes?

MENZIKOF.

A woman unmaſked!

NATALIA.

Am I that to thee?

MENZIKOF.

A very devil in diſguiſe!

NATALIA.

(With ſenſibility and dignity.) Who ſpeaks thus to me? who ſpeaks thus of me? or who ſhall dare to ſpeak thus to me? *(More tranquil.)* But, no! I comprehend you not!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Neither can I comprehend thee—Fool that I was to live till now and know ſo little; that I had not the moſt diſtant conception of the train of infamous ſnares that were laid for me, that I ſhould let my ſenſes be lulled into this infamous ſlumber through thy panegyric on the Emperor, through thy anxious interceſſion for ſupport and protection to thy father; through thy apparently prudent admonitions againſt the faſcinating powers of muſic—by the profuſion of thy careſſes, by the impetuouſneſs of thy tenderneſs with which thou heldeſt me back, as in the arms of love!

NATALIA.

Oh what a horrid ſuſpicion!

MENZIKOF.

Miſerable wretch that I was!——how aſſured I felt in that neſt of ſerpents, amidſt that horrid brood of aſſaſſins and traitors!

NATALIA.

Who will have mercy on me!

MENZIKOF.

Oh woman! woman! how haſt thou deceived me —how miſerably have thy perjuries torn me down

down to the very ground! ſpeak, miſerable woman, werſt thou in the Emperor's arms?

NATALIA.

Infamous lie!

MENZIKOF.

Was it not ſo?

NATALIA.

As God is my witneſs it was not!

MENZIKOF.

Ha! then tremble thou abomination to thy ſex! for thou art then one of the conſpirators!

NATALIA.

I?

MENZIKOF.

How charmingly thou acteſt thy part, in fainting ſo opportunely——who but thoſe acquainted with the language of our confidential tenderneſs—who but thyſelf could have planned or dictated this letter? Oh now I ſee in the twinkling of an eye—and can penetrate into the whole of the ſecret ſlow-ſpun web of this execrable plot!

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

(*Gently.*) Wilt thou not hear me, Alexander?

MENZIKOF.

Go!——before thy judge, there thou mayeſt ſpeak——when if thou art found guilty, will I be inventive to find out ſome new ſpecies of torment for thee——will ſtamp the execrable deed of thy infamy in legible characters on thy face——then have thee led through the world, to be expoſed as a monſter!——go! thou art wanted in the court of juſtice!——go!

NATALIA.

Yes, Field Marſhal, I go!——whatever my fate may be, I go with a peaceful and guiltleſs conſcience to meet it!——God, our univerſal Father, ſees my heart.——He is the protector of the innocent, and alſo, the avenger of afflicted and oppreſſed innocence. [*Exit.*

MENZIKOF.

(*Alone.*) Woman, what an enigma art thou to me? The figure of an angel, the courage of a man, and the heart of a devil!——How ſhe ſtood there, how ſhe anſwered, and how ſhe retired!——ever with nobleneſs and dignity, with all the expreſſion

preſſion of the moſt ſublime feelings!——Oh Nature! if thou cloatheſt thus thy blackeſt criminals in robes of pureſt innocence, in what art thou different from a traitreſs thyſelf?——*(Throws himſelf into a chair, then after a pauſe.)* And however, Natalia——*(Reſuming courage and reſolution.)* Blinded, ſhamefully treacherous heart!—ſtill art thou ever willing to be blinded, and to let thyſelf be deceived!

SCENE III.

The EMPEROR *and* MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(Springing up terrified.) God! himſelf!——oh where ſhall I hide myſelf?

EMPEROR.

Be not alarmed, Field Marſhal, at ſeeing me here!

MENZIKOF.

How impetuouſly was my heart wont to throb with joy when it knew its friend was near!——and now I know nothing in nature more terrible than this name!

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

You best know how far you are guilty or not guilty——you know alſo, that I cannot, that I dare not be your judge: yet I wiſh to be informed of the extent of your crime from yourſelf. Speak the truth!——

MENZIKOF.

Was Amilka with your Majeſty yeſterday?

EMPEROR.

I never ſee eyes on him.

MENZIKOF.

Oh the maſter traitor, the villain——did your Majeſty diſpatch a letter to Natalia, by a Moor?

EMPEROR.

No!

MENZIKOF.

(Confidently.) I read your Majeſty's hand writing.

EMPEROR.

On the honour of a man, I never took up a pen!

MENZIKOF.

Oh ye more than diabolical villains!——they ſlandered you, made you a traitor to friendſhip, and the aſſaſſin to my love, perſuaded me ſo clearly, ſo incontrovertibly of the fact, as I am perſuaded of the exiſtence of the ſun.——A deſperate phrenzy ſeized me, and unconſcious of what I did, in the agony of deſpair I ſwallowed down one glaſs after another——wine and revenge then ſtifled my conſcience; my ſoul aroſe in the wildeſt tumult—then loſt in the acuteſt feelings of horror and mad deſpair, rage and every dreadful paſſion: in ſuch a moment did I become a traitor to you!

EMPEROR.

Go on!

MENZIKOF.

Free air, and a few moments time brought me back to myſelf; Oſſodar ſtill ſought to keep me in his power, and purſued me from ſtreet to ſtreet. As I drew near the palace I obſerved he was ſurrounded with armed men, the whole extent of the project now lay open to my view; Oſſodar was about to iſſue forth his commands. I then ran him through the heart with my ſword, called my faithful adherents together, and flew to the palace to your aſſiſtance.

EMPEROR.

Oh if thou now ſpeakeſt truth, Alexander!

MENZIKOF.

Can I confirm it with an oath? can the perjured man, the traitor be permitted to ſwear?

EMPEROR.

I believe thy word——I pardon thee!

MENZIKOF.

(Falls on his knees.) Oh no great Emperor! let me rather caſt myſelf into chains! for if my ſenſes ſhould again be led aſtray, rage and deſpair may then get the better of me:——ha! then may I be led to commit ſome raſh deed that cannot be repaired!——oh let me rather caſt myſelf into chains!

EMPEROR.

Stand up!——guards!——*(They come in.)* Take the Field Marſhal into arreſt!——the Court of Juſtice is aſſembled, I have nominated to it men void of prejudice, and free from paſſions. May Heaven be as propitious to you as I have been, then will the feelings of humanity flow from the hearts of your Judges.—— *[Exit.*

(Menzikof is conducted out by the guards.)

SCENE IV.

(The Hall of the Court of Criminal Justice, hung with black; EIGHT JUDGES *on the bench——above them the* PRESIDENT *decorated with the insignia of some order; on each side at separate tables a* SECRETARY, *who takes down the depositions of the Conspirators, and writes underneath the sentence of the Judges, the* MOOR *standing before the court, his interrogatory being nearly finished.)*

PRESIDENT.

Dost thou abide by thy deposition?

MOOR.

Yes.

PRESIDENT.

Wait then thy condemnation! *(He calls, and gives the guard that comes in a sign, they conduct the Moor out.)* Judges over life and death——pronounce your sentence over the criminal!

JUDGES.

(With an unanimous voice.) We condemn him to the knute, and afterwards to be hanged.

PRESIDENT.

(Calls to the officer of the court.) Prince Amilka. *(He is brought in by the guard, who go immediately out.)*

SCENE V.

JUDGES, PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES, *and* AMILKA.

PRESIDENT.

Who are you?

AMILKA.

Fedor Amilka, a nobleman of the Ruſſian Empire.

PRESIDENT.

You are accuſed of being the chief in the conſpiracy againſt his Majeſty.

AMILKA.

Who are the witneſſes againſt me?

PRESIDENT.

Already twenty of the conſpirators.

AMILKA.

AMILKA.

I acknowledge it.

PRESIDENT.

What excited you to this deed?

AMILKA.

Eternal hatred to the Emperor.

PRESIDENT.

Who were your accomplices?

AMILKA.

(Pulls out a paper.) Field Marſhal Menzikof, Natalia Euvanſky, born Princeſs Amilka—both the under-written prove the truth of my depoſition.

PRESIDENT.

Farther!

AMILKA.

(Laying the paper on the table.) Here ſtands their names, written with their own hands.

PRESIDENT.

Have you nothing to ſay in your defence?

AMILKA.

No!

PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT.

Do you perſevere in your depoſition?

AMILKA.

I am a man!

PRESIDENT.

(Calls to the guards who conduct Amilka out.) Judges of life and death!——pronounce your ſentence over the criminal!

JUDGES.

(Unanimouſly.) We condemn him to the wheel.

PRESIDENT.

(Calls to the Officer of the Court.) The Princeſs Natalia Euvanſky——*(The guards conduct her in before the Court.)*

SCENE VI.

EIGHT JUDGES, PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES, AMILKA *and* NATALIA.

PRESIDENT.

Your name?

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Natalia Euvanſky, born Princeſs Amilka.

PRESIDENT.

Know you for what cauſe you are brought before this Court?

NATALIA.

No!

PRESIDENT.

You are accuſed of being one of the principal conſpirators againſt the Emperor.

NATALIA.

I have been in no conſpiracy, none; nor have I ever had the moſt diſtant knowledge of any one.—

PRESIDENT.

(Sends her a paper by the Secretary.) Do you know that hand?

NATALIA.

My name, and my hand!

PRESIDENT.

Do you acknowledge this depoſition?

NATALIA.

No.

PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT.

Prince Amilka has witneſſed againſt you.

NATALIA.

(In terror.) My father?——God!——my father againſt me?——

PRESIDENT.

Will you be confronted with him?

NATALIA.

Yes!——no, no, I would ſay——I, confronted with my father before a Court?——no, rather let me ſuffer the moſt ignominious death!

PRESIDENT.

Well, ſpeak then!——

NATALIA.

My father and my own hand bear witneſs againſt me——if I give myſelf for innocent——can that mitigate the ſentence on my father?

PRESIDENT.

We ſpeak here according to juſtice and equity; have you nothing to ſay in your defence?

NATALIA.

Of what avail would words, tears, or oaths be here?——ſince my father and my own hand bear witneſs againſt me!

PRESIDENT.

Thus then we criminate you——come down! *(Calls, Natalia is conducted out.)* Judges of life and death, pronounce your ſentence on the criminal! *(A murmuring amongſt them, ſome of them converſe together.)* Once more:——your ſentence on the criminal!

JUDGES.

We condemn her to be beheaded.

SCENE VII.

JUDGES, PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES, *and a* PERSON *in diſguiſe.*

INCOGNITO.

(Still from without.) God be gracious to you, as you are ſo to each other! *(As he comes in there is a murmuring amongſt the Judges.)*

PRESIDENT.

What would you have here?

INCOGNITO.

Be not apprehenſive, I am unarmed!——

PRESIDENT.

(*Calls to the Officer of the Court.*) Let the doors without be ſurrounded by a ſtrong guard.

INCOGNITO.

Fear not, I beſeech you!——here, read this. (*Preſents a paper to the Preſident.*)

PRESIDENT.

(*To the Judges after having read the paper.*) I'll be pledged for your ſafety. (*To the Incognito.*) What would you have here?

INCOGNITO.

Be a witneſs to your juſtice.

(*A murmuring amongſt the Counſel.*)

PRESIDENT.

Be it ſo; but keep yourſelf peaceable.

INCOGNITO.

Ye judges of the criminal juſtice, be ye juſt, but merciful!——Ye are inveſted with the power to load the innocent with chains—to martyrize virtue ——to condemn the blood of the upright to flow in ſtreams, and yet be juſt——therefore I entreat you once more to be juſt, but humane!

PRESIDENT.

(To the Officer of the Court.) Field Marſhal Menzikof. *(The Guard bring him in.)*

SCENE VIII.

JUDGES, PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES, INCOGNITO, *and* MENZIKOF.

PRESIDENT.

Your name?

MENZIKOF.

Alexander Menzikof.

PRESIDENT.

Your rank?

MENZIKOF.

Field Marſhal.

PRESIDENT.

You are accuſed as a conſpirator againſt the life of his Majeſty, the Emperor.

MENZIKOF.

Examine, and judge!

PRESIDENT.

(*Sends him a paper by the Secretary.*) Is that your hand?

MENZIKOF.

Yes.

PRESIDENT.

What could have excited you to conſpire againſt the life of the Emperor?

MENZIKOF.

Before the judgment-ſeat of Friendſhip I could juſtify myſelf; but before *your* judgment-ſeat ſtands the ſoldier, the citizen, and the ſubject.

PRESIDENT.

Thus then we criminate you.

INCOGNITO.

Judges! You condemn this man perhaps in the belief that you have adminiſtered juſtice. But I tell you that it is a moſt noble, a truly upright, and an innocent man that ye have condemned.—Liſten to me, and then pronounce the ſentence! Who the man is I need not inform you; what this man is in the field of battle, what in the cabinet he has done for the good of Ruſſia, that ye all know as well as I; and that this man poſſeſſes in himſelf the *ſpirit*, the *underſtanding*, the ſtrength, the heroic virtue and courage of ten men, you will not deny.——Well then ye men of the awful court of juſtice, how feel ye?——does not your very ſouls tremble? does no cold ſhudder ſeize you after having pronounced condemnation over Ruſſia's braveſt warrior, over the Emperor's moſt cordial friend, over the nobleſt and moſt renowned of your fellow citizens?——Have ye not heard that the friend of the Emperor could juſtify himſelf, wherefore then do you not deſire to hear this juſtification, wherefore then would you ſo willingly ſuffer a ſeparation of the citizen and ſubject from the Emperor's friend?——Moſt true it is that his name ſtands on this paper! but *why* and *wherefore*——has nothing to do with the cauſe———liſten farther ye men of criminal juſtice! a deep and long concerted plan was laid to enſnare him——through an infamous

train

train of artifices he was drawn into their plot; they rendered the conduct of the Emperor ſuſpicious to him; they perſuaded him by the means of a well forged hand of the moſt infamous treachery to his friendſhip.——The Emperor, his friend a traitor? that afflicted him; that my Lords agonized his very ſoul, his mind was tortured beyond expreſſion, his imagination was heated by having drank, inflamed and wrought on by the importunities of the rebels to rage and revenge, borne down by the moſt imperious and moſt invincible of all paſſions—— he gave in the whirlwind of forgetfulneſs, his name to it.

MENZIKOF.

Noble Incognito——

INCOGNITO.

Interrupt me not——! but, once got at a diſtance from this aſſembly of traitors, he came to himſelf in the firſt moment, aſſembled his faithful adherents; flew with them to the palace; ſought out the aſſaſſins; diſperſed them; took them priſoners; ſtruck the Moor to the ground who had the dagger already pointed at the Emperor's back—— conſider now, my Lords, how different a figure the cauſe gains by an enquiry into the why and wherefore.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Generous Incognito, whoever thou art; what could induce thee to ſuch a rare inſtance of friendſhip, of humanity and good will, to ſuch a wonderful ſtep as voluntarily to take up the cauſe of a traitor, to defend it with ſuch ſingular ability and ſpirit?

INCOGNITO.

(*Shaking him by the hand.*) Doſt thou not know me then?

MENZIKOF.

(*Aſtoniſhed.*) Is it poſſible!

INCOGNITO.

Judges of the Supreme Criminal Court!——I beſeech your ſentence!

PRESIDENT.

We wiſh you ſpoke the truth; but how can we give credit to an Incognito?

INCOGNITO.

(*Takes the maſk from his face.*) Is the witneſs admiſſible? (*They diſcover him to be the Emperor, the Judges ſtand up.*)

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

May it pleaſe your Majeſty——

EMPEROR.

Your ſentence!

PRESIDENT.

Judges over life and death——your ſentence on the accuſed!

JUDGES.

(*Unanimouſly.*) We pronounce the Field Marſhal Menzikof free from all guilt and puniſhment!

EMPEROR.

Be now diligent to publiſh his innocence amongſt the people!——what has paſſed here remains a ſecret amongſt ourſelves.

MENZIKOF.

(*At the Emperor's feet.*) Your Majeſty——

EMPEROR.

In the battle of Pultawa I was indebted to thee for a life——the debt is now paid! [*Exit.*

MENZIKOF.

(*Still on his knees.*) Your Majeſty!——

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The EMPEROR, *and afterwards* SERDJUKOW.

EMPEROR.

(*Taking ſeveral turns backwards and forwards.*) My fool has declared his principles pretty evidently by his actions this day——well!——he ſhall not have done it in vain.——(*Calls to a ſervant.*) Deſire my fool to come here. [*Exit Servant.*

SERDJUKOW.

(*Haſtening in.*) What art thou ſick of *ennui* that thou haſt ſent for thy fool?

EMPEROR.

Thou art a moſt learned phyſician for that.

SERDJUKOW.

Yes, a phyſician that would cure himſelf with opium, or rather with poiſon.

EMPEROR.

Come nearer.

SERDJUKOW.

I thank you!

EMPEROR.

Why not?

SERDJUKOW.

I do not voluntarily live on ſo confidential a footing with executioners.

EMPEROR.

Thou mayeſt have thy own reaſons for that!

SERDJUKOW.

To ſay all in all, thou art a threefold great man, a MONSTROUS MACHINE of a great man.

EMPEROR.

How ſo?

SERDJUKOW.

The greateſt jew in thy whole dominions;—the greateſt mariner on the ſeas;——and the greateſt executioner in all Europe.

EMPEROR.

And thou art the moſt melancholy and the rudeſt fool in the whole world; I have almoſt come to a reſolution to turn thee out of thy office. (*Seriouſly.*) Come nearer!——who locked the entrance to the palace, when this night the rebels were already crowding and preſſing to make their way in?

SERDJUKOW.

Thy fool.

EMPEROR.

Who ſpread the alarm in the palace?

SERDJUKOW.

Thy fool.

EMPEROR.

Why ſo?

SERDJUKOW.

Becauſe thy ability as an executioner ſhould not fail of poor ſinners to exerciſe itſelf upon.

EMPEROR.

Who opened the principal door of the palace to the Field Marſhal?

SERDJUKOW.

SERDJUKOW.

Still thy fool,

EMPEROR.

Wherefore?

SERDJUKOW.

Becauſe the Field Marſhal is the moſt furious hound of thy whole pack at catching a villain.

EMPEROR.

(Calls a ſervant.) Bring what I ordered. *(Brings on a ſalver a hat and feather, a ſword and papers.)* *(To Serdjukow.)* Give me thy cap! *(Takes the cap, and ſets the hat on his head.)* Thy club! *(For which he returns him the ſword, then preſents him with the papers.)* A happy journey to you, Governor of Kiow.

SERDJUKOW.

(Throws himſelf at the Emperor's feet.) Your Majeſty——

EMPEROR.

Thy diſgrace is now obliterated, tomorrow thy marriage with Cyrilla muſt take place, and thou becomeſt a good citizen! go! *(Calls him back.)* Yet one moment:——I ſhall come to thy wedding.

[Exit Serdjukow.

SCENE

SCENE II.

EMPEROR *and* MENZIKOF.

EMPEROR.

My recovered friend!

MENZIKOF.

(Humiliated.) Ah my God!

EMPEROR.

The *disagrément* of this little misunderstanding can be attended with no other consequences than that of cementing the hearts of two friends still more nearly together.

MENZIKOF.

How well you know how to revenge yourself! your anger, your rage cannot bend me; but this excess of kindness presses me down to the earth—— oh my God! into what an abyss of misery has one luckless night plunged me into!——

EMPEROR.

Nothing farther of that!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

A miſerable wretch, without power, without property I throw myſelf into the arms of my generous Peter, to abandon myſelf wholly to his guidance! will you make me once more your friend?—

EMPEROR.

Alexander!

MENZIKOF.

Thus then you will perfect a work becoming your generous ſoul, and make your friend become a man again. (*After a pauſe, melancholy and timid.*) Is there one queſtion permitted me?

EMPEROR.

Speak!

MENZIKOF.

Natalia's fate?

EMPEROR.

Is in the hands of her Judges.

MENZIKOF.

If ſhe ſhould prove innocent?

EMPEROR.

Then would I fly with her to the arms of her bridegroom.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

But if she should have acted a part in the conspiracy, that she bore her share of its guilt in her heart; having been educated in the midst of cabal and murderous plots?

EMPEROR.

Then would I pardon her for the sake of my friend, and Menzikof——

MENZIKOF.

——Might then well forgive her too!

SCENE III.

The EMPEROR, MENZIKOF, *and a* COUNSELLOR.

COUNSELLOR.

May it please your Majesty, here are the death warrants.

EMPEROR.

(After having received them.) Wait in the anti-chamber! *(The Counsellor goes out, after having read through the warrants, he holds them with a trembling hand.)* My God!——what do I read?—

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(*Waiting with the moſt agonizing apprehenſion.*) Natalia——

EMPEROR.

Is one of the principal conſpirators!

MENZIKOF.

One of the principal conſpirators?

EMPEROR.

Stands ſigned by her own hand, the very firſt under the confederation oath, has the depoſition of her own father, the depoſition of ſeveral other conſpirators, and laſtly her own acknowledgement againſt her.

MENZIKOF.

(*After a pauſe, breathing more freely.*) 'Tis well! ——well with me now! I am cured——(*While the Emperor ſigns the warrants.*) Ha! infamous woman! murdreſs of friendſhip and of love!——oh that I could myſelf be thy executioner, thy tormentor! ——how then would I with ever thundering curſes, with all the deſpair of tumultuous revenge and raging fury, awaken thee back again from each deadly agony, to freſh martyrizing torments.

EMPEROR.

(*Calls, the Counſellor comes, he gives him all the death-warrants excepting one.*) The moſt ſpeedy execution poſſible! (*Counſellor goes.*) They are all ſigned except one, but the pen ſinks out of my hand when I reflect that it is the beloved, the bride of my friend for whom I have to ſign that warrant.

MENZIKOF.

Oh give the ſerpent no ſuch honourable epithets!——the traitreſs——ſhe muſt die!

EMPEROR.

I thought however that a reſpite till the morning——

MENZIKOF.

Wherefore grant the ſpace of an hour to the murdreſs?

EMPEROR.

She is however but a woman!

MENZIKOF.

A woman, but a woman——know you then woman ſo little?——oh what are a thouſand open ſworn enemies, when compared to ſuch a criminal

nal as this——who, with that ſeducing look, that poiſonous, ſweet perſuaſive tongue, and that hypocritical ſoul, who with deep and well practiced policy, could deceive you under the fair form of virtue and magnanimity, till you are led on ſtep by ſtep to perdition!

EMPEROR.

Thou ſpeakeſt too paſſionately, Alexander!

MENZIKOF.

I am cool, vaſtly cool! I pray you write!—— I pray you for your own ſake to write!

EMPEROR.

Whence comes it that theſe three words are ſo difficult to me?

MENZIKOF.

(Cold and bitter.) There was a maiden, beautiful, blooming and lovely as the morning of Spring—— when ſhe ſpoke, your ſoul melted as at the ſound of celeſtial muſic; inviting, bewitching as the ſmiles of a demi-goddeſs——

EMPEROR.

Is that not Natalia?

MENZIKOF.

Such was Hamilton.——Peter, you muſt ſtill remember Hamilton?

EMPEROR.

Barbarian!

MENZIKOF.

The maiden had pleaſed you;——who could oppoſe you?——ſhamefacedneſs is really a virtue alſo.——Hamilton was the murderer of a child. That perhaps was your child!

EMPEROR.

(Somewhat warm.) Field Marſhal——

MENZIKOF.

Liſten to me!——the murdreſs who became ſuch through ſhamefacedneſs was condemned to death. The hand that once found ſuch ſweet delight in playing with her golden locks, and ſtroking the new blown roſes on her cheeks;——this ſame hand ſigned her death-warrant——write now however.

EMPEROR.

Yes, I'll write——

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

No——do not write——for amongſt many old writings in the records of the crown it is ſaid nations ſhall proclaim war; but nations ſhall preſent the olive branch if my name ſtands there inſtead of yours——oh let me ſign the death-warrant of the murdreſs of a king!——

EMPEROR.

Senſeleſs man, what wouldeſt thou do?

MENZIKOF.

On my knees I beſeech it of you! theſe three words would not then be ſo difficult to you!

EMPEROR.

Well then, write! (*Menzikof ſeizes haſtily the pen and writes.*) Reflect on what thou haſt done!

MENZIKOF.

Taken revenge, ſweet revenge that has filled my heart with joy!

EMPEROR.

Say but one word, and thy name is eraſed!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Oh grant me rather the pleaſure of ſeeing it there——to ſee it and deſpair! (*He hurries out with the death-warrant.*)

EMPEROR.

(*Haſtens after him.*) Senſeleſs man!

SCENE IV.

A Priſon.

NATALIA, *and afterwards an Officer of Juſtice.*

NATALIA.

(*Dreſſed in white, with black ornaments, ſitting at a table arranging her jewels, papers, &c.—then with reſolution and dignity.*) I am prepared for my journey!——

OFFICER.

I have gained the permiſſion for your father to ſpeak with you.

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

I thank you.

OFFICER.

He will be here immediately.

NATALIA.

How looked he when you named me to him?

OFFICER.

His eyes were dry, his look was cold.

NATALIA.

(*Afflicted.*) Amilka——and tears! (*She takes the ring from her finger, and presses it into the officer's hand.*) Receive this small token of my gratitude! farewell! (*Exit Officer.*) He tranquil! tranquil with his conscience!——and thou Natalia art not tranquil, nor canst thou find the least repose! (*A rattling of chains.*) What do I hear?——God!—— 'tis my father!——

SCENE

SCENE V.

NATALIA *and* AMILKA *in Chains.*

AMILKA.

(Cool and firm.) You wiſhed to ſpeak with me?

NATALIA.

What can a daughter deſire more ardently in the laſt moments of her life than——

AMILKA.

It comes very unſeaſonably——to remind me of this miſerable moment. Make it as ſhort as poſſible!——tell me in two words what you have to ſay!

NATALIA.

We are both of us making a long journey, my father! oh ſtand ſtill one moment while yet on the brink of the grave, and reflect——that beyond it, my father——

AMILKA.

Fool! to think one dreams of a Heaven and hell beyond this;——'tis a heavenly vengeance that one enjoys here.——A good journey to you. [*Going.*

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

(*Holding him back.*) Oh my father!

AMILKA.

(*Fixing his eyes on her, ſtaring wildly, then embraces her.*) 'Twas really a delightful moment that gave thee to me!——(*Puſhing her roughly from him.*) But a moſt heavenly one in which I brought on thy deſtruction, thou enemy to my fame, thou deſtroyer of my glory!——(*More moderate.*) Haſt thou any thing more to ſay?

NATALIA.

Nothing more, nothing more my father than—(*Holding out her right hand to him.*)—that I forgive you!——(*Amilka appears to be touched, combats with himſelf—then goes out reſolutely.*) Thou leaveſt me, wretched man, with a malediction in thy heart againſt an innocent child——loaden with the curſes of the Almighty, whoſe power thou denyeſt.

SCENE VI.

NATALIA, *A Judge in mourning, accompanied by several other Perſons.*

JUDGE.

(Preſenting her with the death-warrant.) From the hands of Juſtice.

NATALIA.

(After having opened it, ſtarts back in trembling.) Field Marſhal Menzikof—in the name of the Emperor!

JUDGE.

Have you underſtood what it imports?

NATALIA.

(Taking courage.) Yes!——how much longer time have I?

JUDGE.

I cannot with certainty promiſe you an hour.

NATALIA.

I ſhall be found prepared! [*Exit Judge.*

SCENE

SCENE VII.

NATALIA *alone.*

His name, his name under my death warrant?—ALEXANDER, canſt thou thus dip thy hands in the blood of thy beloved?——a father bears witneſs againſt an innocent child, and LOVE condemns thee to death:——is there any thing more barbarous in nature?——what are theſe feelings within me that aſpire ſo powerfully above every thing terreſtrial? and this voice that ſpeaks with ſuch powerful eloquence to my ſoul?——ſo much conſolation, ſo much cheerful aſſurance ſheds its benevolent influence through my whole exiſtence?——what can it be but the reſult of a pure conſcience——and the full ſentiment of innocence. That haſt thou!——compoſedly I ſtand on the brink of the grave——here in the duſt I can contemplate the plans of eternal wiſdom——and am reſigned to fulfil its decrees!——Oh all ye noble heavenly ſouls of antiquity, ye victims of cabal and tyranny——who with the ſublime dignity of conſcious innocence went to meet every kind of martyrdom with a cheerful countenance and invincible courage——to follow you, to die like you——may be deemed a TRIUMPH——rather than DEATH!——but yet a

few words to him, to him in whose eyes 'tis yet so painful a thing to me, that I should appear guilty! *(She writes with a pencil on a piece of paper.)* Let this be thy inheritance! this my revenge!——

SCENE VIII.

NATALIA, *and* CYRILLA, *in mourning.*

CYRILLA.

(Hastening into Natalia's arms.) Natalia!

NATALIA.

Dost thou search me out in my bridal chamber?

CYRILLA.

Ah God!

NATALIA.

Yet a few more minutes, and we part for ever!

CYRILLA.

I will not leave thee.

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Away with theſe tears, they rob me of my courage; but yet, they are the tears of ſuffering friendſhip!

CYRILLA.

Ah my God! this is too much to bear!

NATALIA.

Is it not a benevolent diſpoſition in the providence of heaven, that it ſtrengthens the faculties of mankind in proportion to the evils they have to encounter, let them be ever ſo great?——be compoſed and conſole thyſelf with me!

CYRILLA.

What a great ſoul!

NATALIA.

(Wiping the tears from her eyes.) The laſt moment of my life ought be marked by a more weighty occupation than that of weeping.——I entreat thee to undertake a commiſſion from me that I could confide to no other than my friend. *(Taking papers out of her ſtrong box and preſenting them one after another to Cyrilla.)* Here is a penſion for life to my people, this contains a ſum for portioning out poor and

virtuous

virtuous young women. This ſum is deſtined to the relief of reſpectable and domeſtic poverty.——Here is a remembrance for thy child——the little ſmiling angel hung ever on me with ſo much cordial love.——It is my picture! at preſent make him ſimply pleaſed with its brilliant appearance:——but in future, if the ſweet boy ſhould grow up a youth of ſenſibility, remember him of my fate; and my picture will be of more value to him than the diamonds that ſurround it.

CYRILLA.

Oh how well thou knoweſt how to pierce my ſoul through and through with anguiſh by thy tenderneſs!

NATALIA.

Thou mayeſt remember my little eſtate near Kronſtadt? where we enjoyed each others ſociety ſo many months in domeſtic harmony. How the natural beauties of the place bloomed forth a little Paradiſe under the aſſiduous cultivation of our hands? receive this as a laſt remembrance of thy friend!——I beſeech thee take courage! I yet ſtand in need of one laſt proof of thy affection——

CYRILLA.

I would give my life to ſave thine!

NATALIA.

NATALIA.

Nor have I forgotten my Alexander——I muſt in his eyes be the moſt execrable creature, the moſt miſerable outcaſt of God's creation! (*Putting a purſe into her hand.*) Take this purſe, and give me ſimply a proof of affectionate but aweful ſervice, buy with it my head of the executioner as ſoon as it ſhall be ſevered from my body.

CYRILLA.

(*With terror.*) Natalia!——

NATALIA.

Haſten with it to ſome celebrated painter, let him copy the pale blood-beſprinkled object with all the *traits* of courageous innocence, and triumphant patience he will find it marked with——the picture accompanied with this paper is a preſent for my bridegroom. Thou art aſtoniſhed?——oh wonder not! his name ſtands under my death-warrant!

CYRILLA.

Oh the barbarian!

NATALIA.

If Heaven is juſt, when my innocence is made clear——(*With confidence.*) And that day muſt ſurely

surely come: for that day, I leave him in this picture a monument, that for the remainder of his days, will be for him a sacred and an awful one.

CYRILLA.

(*Courageously presenting her hand to her.*) As true as God is above me, thy request shall be fulfilled.

SCENE IX.

NATALIA, CYRILLA, *an* OFFICER *of* JUSTICE, *and a* GUARD.

OFFICER.

I have an order to take you hence.

CYRILLA.

(*Lost in despair.*) Oh God!

NATALIA.

I'll follow you——despair not my friend! we are not yet taking leave—— [*Exeunt arm in arm.*

—SCENE

SCENE X.

Menzikof's Houſe.

MENZIKOF, *alone.*

(On a chair in deep reflexion, and much caſt down.) Thus then it is with the world; thus does man experience its bleſſings here below!—ſhort ſighted fool, who had conceived ſo ſublime, ſo ſacred an idea of human nature.—Werſt thou really happy——or was it but the fancy of thy brain? or are there in reality dreams which continue uninterrupted through whole years together——where you are rocked into ſweet ſlumbers of happineſs? If the deeds of mankind and fortune, if his repoſe, his felicity is nothing more than a paſſing dream: ——why then after this horrid change muſt his miſery become real?——Natalia! Natalia!——again this name from my lips?——again this heart throbbing loudly at the name?——how is this? ——even a tear?——God pardon me theſe tears! they are the moſt diſgraceful that can flow from the eyes of man!——*(One hears the tumult of aſſembled people, the tolling of a bell, the beating of drums, Menzikof haſtens to the window.)* Ha!—— the execution is then began——

SCENE XI.

EMPEROR, *and* MENZIKOF.

EMPEROR.

Thou thus alone Alexander?——come with me! we both of us need diſſipation.

MENZIKOF.

Oh leave me here! I'll ſhed my blood! let me mix my imprecations, my curſes with thoſe of this ſeditious people!

EMPEROR.

And doſt thou believe this is a medicine will agree with thee?

MENZIKOF.

Ha! ſee there the high prieſt! they are conducting him cloſe by here—oh ſee the deadly anguiſh of the coward, the dying fire of his knowing, ſleepy eye, the timid tottering of his ſtep——haſt thou no project that can redeem thee from the wheel?——miſerable creature!——thou art ready to conſume into duſt, while yet under the hand of the executioner.——

EMPEROR.

Let us go!

MENZIKOF.

Yet another moment!——what is it coming there ſo ſlowly round the corner?——Ha! Amiraa!——See the bold arrogant man, who ſo hardened in villainy that no deſcription of torture can bring to tremble!——his ſtep is equal and firm, his looks are wandering on every ſide free, and undaunted——ha! thou lookeſt this way!——his iron front is unclouded and his complexion high——how he ſpeaks in ſocial jeſt with his executioner.—How void of terror, and with what an eager curioſity he examines the inſtruments prepared for his own torture——oh what a ſlow conſuming fire muſt be working within thee, through all thy animal ſpirits, and through every ſentiment of thy ſoul——

EMPEROR.

He is certainly a great villain, but notwithſtanding that a moſt wonderful man!

MENZIKOF.

Tell me yourſelf if he does not appear to be wrought up to that perfection of vengeance as if it

was he himſelf would give pain to the torture, inſtead of being ſubject to feel torments from it——as if his members were turned to iron, and that thoſe iron limbs would in rage brave the wheel, and ſhatter it to atoms at the firſt touch!——There's ſome new crowd puſhing forwards——*(Shocked.)* Oh what do I ſee?——wherefore is my ſoul ſo ſuddenly unhinged——what a powerful ray muſt it be to melt this flint *(His hand to his heart.)* ſo inſtantaneouſly?

EMPEROR.

'Tis now high time that we ſhould both quit the window.

MENZIKOF.

Oh ſtay!——for were you to ſurvive a hundred years, you could never behold ſuch another ſcene!——Does guilt appear under ſuch a form as this: ſuch a wonderful form and guiſe of purity, that it could eclipſe the moſt brilliant virtue?——a beautiful criminal——ſuch a criminal—great as a man, courageous and undaunted as a man——'tis a fine fight——and a moſt deſirable one for a man to behold.

EMPEROR.

Enough of it!——

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Was the whole world transformed into a Tragedy, ſuch a ſcene as this could never be repreſented again! (*Looks awhile fixedly towards the window.*) God!——if ſhe ſhould be innocent——(*With a low and trembling voice.*) You are in the right, let us go from the window!——how is it with me, my eyes are grown dim; and my knees knock againſt each other——

EMPEROR.

(*Bringing him to a chair.*) Lay thy head on the heart of thy friend.

SCENE XII.

MENZIKOF, EMPEROR, *and* GENERAL BAUER.

BAUER,

(*Still from within the Scenes.*) Let me on——back with you!——I muſt go in——

EMPEROR.

What can that be?

BAUER.

BAUER.

(Forcing himself in.) For the love of God, deliverance!——deliverance for the innocent!

MENZIKOF.

(Springing up.) What sayest thou?

BAUER.

Natalia is innocent!

MENZIKOF.

(Transported.) Innocent?

BAUER.

Oh 'twill be already too late, by the time I can have fought my way through the guards——

EMPEROR.

Canst thou prove her innocence?

BAUER.

Oh deliverance first of all!——If your feet are not quick as the sound of the human voice, then——

EMPEROR.

(Hastens to the window, then wrings his hands.) Great God——'tis already over——already the people are pressing in crowds from the place.

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(In all the geſticulations of deſpair.) The blood of the innocent! *(To Bauer.)* Speak, miſerable creature!——no, ſhe is not innocent!——all is dumb and ſilent——like the midnight waſte——all is pale as death!——

SCENE XIII.

MENZIKOF, EMPEROR, BAUER, *and* TZUDOF.

TZUDOF.

May it pleaſe your Majeſty! your judges have no ear for the petition of an old man.——'Tis now ten years that I have languiſhed in a priſon innocently——and I now ſupplicate for the life of an innocent princeſs!

EMPEROR.

Poor man, you come too late!

TZUDOF.

Woe be to you then! ſee you not how the blood of the innocent drops from your crown?

EMPEROR.

(To Bauer.) Thy proofs!

BAUER.

Natalia believed ſhe had ſigned her marriage contract, and wrote her name unconſciouſly under the confederation oath that was laid before her.

EMPEROR.

Who ſaw that?

BAUER.

I ſaw it myſelf——I ſtood cloſe by her chair, ſhe was then conducted out, and the reſt of the conſpirators wrote their names on the ſame ſheet.—— I avoided doing the ſame, was ſeized, diſarmed, bound hand and foot and caſt into a dungeon—— where on the information of one of the conſpirators I was found and ſet at liberty.

EMPEROR.

Horrible! oh moſt horrible!

MENZIKOF.

Out of this heart proceeded the murder, theſe lips pronounced againſt her!—theſe hands dipped themſelves in the blood of innocence and love!

EMPEROR.

EMPEROR.

Oh moſt cruel day!——would that thou couldeſt be eraſed from memory——gladly would I yield up the moſt brilliant years of my life to blot thee out of the ambiguous hiſtory of mankind!

SCENE XIV.

MENZIKOF, EMPEROR, BAUER, TZUDOF *and* CYRILLA.

CYRILLA.

(To Menzikof.) A ſalutation from Natalia!

MENZIKOF.

My God!——does ſhe live?

CYRILLA.

Yes!

MENZIKOF.

Where?——where?

CYRILLA.

(Pointing to her heart.) Here.

MENZIKOF.

Barbarous woman!

CYRILLA.

(Preſenting him with a paper.) This is from her!

MENZIKOF.

(Seizing it haſtily.) To me? *(Deſpairing.)* Who will read it?

EMPEROR.

(Reading.) I die with compoſure, my bridegroom! for I die the death of the innocent——ſtill, in theſe my laſt moments I am full of comfort and the ſtrongeſt conſolation, the hope of meeting thee again beyond this world, and I kiſs the hand that has ſigned my death-warrant——deſpiſe not the little remembrance thou wilt receive from the hand of my friend——farewel! thy Natalia will continue to love thee ſtill, beyond the grave. *(A pauſe and deep ſilence.)*

CYRILLA.

Now Field Marſhal, do you not long after your remembrance?——a remembrance that truly you do not merit. *(Goes, a pauſe, all is ſilent and melancholy expectation.)*

SCENE XV.

MENZIKOF, EMPEROR, BAUER, TSUDOR, *and* NATALIA, *conducted in by* CYRILLA.

EMPEROR.

Is it poſſible!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

(In the tumult of his ſenſes, between extreme joy and conſcious ſhame, falls at Natalia's feet.) God!

TZUDOF.

Heaven then has heard my petitions——

NATALIA.

ALEXANDER!

MENZIKOF.

Miſerable wretch that I am!

EMPEROR.

Unravel this happy enigma.

CYRILLA.

In the laſt moments of his life Amilka declared the innocence of his daughter; the partners of his guilt confirmed his information. In that very inſtant thouſands of voices reſounded: Deliverance, deliverance, Natalia is innocent!——the multitude preſſed on to the very ſcaffold, and reſcued Natalia from the hands of the executioner, and accompanied her here rejoicing!

EMPEROR.

Heaven be praiſed!——

NATALIA.

(Endeavours to raiſe Menzikof.) My bridegroom! my Alexander!

MENZIKOF.

MENZIKOF.

Miſerable wretch that I am.

NATALIA.

What an indeſcribable moment, that of ſeeing thee again.

MENZIKOF.

I cannot venture to look up to thee!

NATALIA.

Oh what wrongs are there that my heart cannot forgive in ſuch a moment?

MENZIKOF.

Natalia!

EMPEROR.

Noble greatneſs of ſoul——dare I alſo hope?

NATALIA.

Oh my ſovereign!

EMPEROR.

(Raiſing Menzikof.) Riſe up Duke of Ingria!

MENZIKOF.

(Embracing the Emperor.) My Emperor, my friend!——*(Takes Natalia in his arms.)* Natalia—my wife!——

THE END.